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**Mapping Invisible Cities:
Addressing the Complexities of
Achieving Polyphonic Archives**

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PhD 2016

Mapping Invisible Cities: Addressing the Complexities of Achieving Polyphonic Archives

Susan Maxwell

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements of the University of
Northumbria at Newcastle for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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Computing, Engineering and
Information Sciences**

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Kublai Khan does not necessarily believe everything that Marco Polo says. ... Only in Marco Polo's accounts was Kublai Khan able to discern, through walls and towers destined to crumble, the tracery of a pattern so subtle it could escape the termite's gnawing.

Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, Picador, 3rd ed. 1983, pg. 10.

Forget your perfect offering/There is a crack ... in everything/that's how the light gets in

Leonard Cohen, "Anthem", 1992.

Abstract

In the 1990s and 2000s, the theory on which professional practice of archivists and records managers drew was reviewed, in light of cultural and technological changes and of postmodernist philosophies. In particular, the theoretical narrative of the “neutral archives” was terminally disrupted, and more explicit responsibility attributed to the profession for actively seeking to redress the way that power imbalances in contemporary society were reflected in ‘the archive’.

Professional archivists and records managers began to look for ways in which as professionals they could counteract these areas of neglect. There had not been any systematic analysis of “marginality” or “marginalised” as a concept, as opposed to particular instances thereof. In addition, the focus of attention in many of the responses had been those records related to situations or groups that already had been politicised. This combination seemed problematic, as a conceptualisation of marginality or exclusion was emerging and consolidating, one that focused primarily on situations of political instability or disenfranchisement or of conflict. While the disruption of the narrative of the neutral archive could in theory have resonance for all information professionals in all working environments, the particulars of the examples of exclusion and marginalisation were not applicable in every scenario. That is to say, those archivists and records managers who were not responsible for records that were in some clear way related to a politicised group or situation could assume on that basis that they were not, in their professional capacity, colluding in exclusion, marginalisation or neglect.

By articulating the conceptualisation of marginality and seeking to focus on possible domestic and quotidian means by which power imbalances and exclusions are manifested, this research contributes to the extension of the relevance of the debate

to politically stable environments and everyday activities, in addition to unstable or post-conflict situations. By focusing on the potentially dynamic relationship between the information curator and the records for which they were responsible – rather than the records creators or subjects – it also draws out additional opportunities for professional engagement with social and cultural imbalances.

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Dedication: This is dedicated, in memoriam, to Thaddeus Maxwell

Declaration and Plagiarism Disclaimer

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledges opinions, ideas and contributions of others.

Ethical approval for the research presented in this thesis was granted on 7th June 2011

The word count is 71,348

Susan Maxwell

Signature

Date: 31st August 2016

Chapter One: Introduction and Background Context

1.1 Introduction

The power of ‘the archives’ – the significant and sometimes deciding role played by a repository of records, believed to contain actionable truths – is not only a characteristic often reflected on within the profession, but is widely represented in contemporary culture. This importance is reflected in appearances in literature and in film alike, from ‘dossier’ novels to a scene in a 1927 film in which an archivist during the French Revolution, using pulley-ropes to ascend and descend the stacks of papers, eats the records of those aristocrats whom he wishes to protect (Gance, 1927).

Considerable work has been done within the profession to ensure that, within the variety of roles played by the record – as evidence, as memory, for justice, for cultural enrichment – there is a balance of benefactors. The late 1990s saw the emergence of a debate in the professional literature, through articles and responses to articles that, influenced by postmodernist philosophies, challenged the existing dominance of the conceptualisation of “the archives” as a politically-neutral entity. The challenges were often illustrated by examples of the importance of records in situations of (or after) political instability, conflict or extremes. Arising from the questions and issues that arose during this time (an overview is part of the literature review, Chapter 3) was a development of interest in how archives engaged with the margins of society and the people who, for a variety of reasons, were not considered part of mainstream life. The interaction between marginalised people and their lives, and archives (particularly formal or established archives), is one arena of interest to this research.

Often, though, the illustrations of the importance of the recorded history of a society, including contemporary society, are focussed on 'big' events, political turning-points or 'important' people, and it can be harder to draw out the same roles for the archives in relation to 'ordinary' people and everyday life. A record in an archive is comparable to a work of art in an art gallery, in the sense that it has been selected as having importance, and is contextualized in a particular kind of way. The complexity of these actions (or processes) that can make it difficult to conceptualize how a society can retain the records of all aspects of experienced life, without recommending the impossible and probably self-defeating option of keeping everything. The routine requirements and administration of living can be so very routine that few people would consider keeping any documentary evidence of them. At the same time, these routines may be the actual experience of the majority of people in a given society, and therefore to leave it untraced is a significant absence. Equally, it is in the everyday routines of life that political ideologies become normalised and are enacted; so the everyday and the routine can transpire to have political significance, either in relation to a society or a country, or in relation to particular groups or communities therein. This fillip of contemporary life – the disregarded and undistinguished routines of the lived experience and the records they might create– is another arena of interest in this research. This seemed a somewhat nebulous aspect of records and archives, and difficult to nail down by identifying, classifying and defining types of records. Consequently the title of this thesis borrows an image from the author Italo Calvino. His book, *Invisible Cities*, has as its theme a (fictional) series of conversations between the 16th century Italian explorer and merchant, Marco Polo and the Kublai Khan (Calvino 1983). The Khan obliges Polo to describe the cities that he has seen, because the Khan feels

overwhelmed by the empire he ostensibly controls. There are fifty-two tales of different cities, and it is revealed that all the cities described are Venice, but a different city depending on whether it is experienced in youth or old age, approached from the north or the south, seen in winter or in summer, or other alternative starting-points. The valuable element of this was the concept of a city having multiple equal realities that are fundamentally different and not reflected on a recognizable map, and seemed to point to the need to find a way to ensure that the map of any given society (the records and traces left by life in that society) contained all the invisible or unwanted areas, those aspects of society that are perceived to be either banal or distasteful or idiosyncratic. This last element– the invisible within the city – is an extension of the marginalized – those pushed outside the city walls.

The thesis title also borrows the concept of a map as a sign of the archives, a map being very easily recognizable as a mechanism of description and guidance that, placed in conjunction with the imaginary ‘invisible cities’ of Calvino’s title, helps to encapsulate a somewhat fragile relationship being established in the research.

Having adopted the map in this fashion as an image, or sign, or totem of the archives, there may be further significance to draw from it that can in turn prompt questions or illuminate routes to answers about the archives and its contents. The archive is a representation of the society that created and left it, and is not the thing itself. It is an outline, a scheme, an example; it is a guide, rather than a portrait, it does not contain every piece of information ever recorded any more than a map, short of being the size of the land it depicts (Jonker 2009, pg73), can show every detail. A map should not be expected to account for everything, neither should an archives. On the other hand, this parallel between a map and an archives implies profound passivity. While it may be useful for managing expectations of what a map

or archives can deliver, it implies neutrality, and a distance from responsibility for the content on behalf of the creator, that is unsustainable. For example, in 2001, the British Library opened an exhibition based on the contents of its map library; the exhibition was called *Lie of the Land: The Secret Life of Maps*. The accompanying publication notes '[t]he mapmaker has to simplify, reflecting only those elements of reality that he or she considers to be necessary to serve their or their master's purpose' (British Library, 2001). That this is the case was demonstrated by the exhibition including maps of fictional places, maps that facilitated one or other side in conflict situations, such as 'ethnic maps' of countries under Nazi control or maps to facilitate suppression of labour riots in London, as well as maps in which the owner's country is disproportionately large or detailed. In these instances, the map shares another characteristic with the archives: its usefulness as a tool or mechanism in administering particular political ideologies.

That the knowledge gap existed in relation to these two areas of interest seemed to be implied cumulatively by the professional literature that discussed marginalisation, archival political responsibilities, and the actions taken in response to particular instances of exclusion or marginalisation. Here, the professional literature was being read as part of professional engagement, not as part of any research project. Cumulatively, the literature interpreted 'marginalised' predominantly as 'actively excluded from mainstream society' and implicitly as 'already politicised', while the majority of (but not all) responses to the fact of marginalisation focused on engagement with people (Chapters 3 and 4, the literature review and the presentation of the data used, give an overview of this interpretation and Chapter 5 discusses in more detail the conceptualisation of 'marginalised'). This interpretation and these responses were not incorrect but they seemed to lack

comprehensiveness. The fact that archivists (records management was rarely the context of these articles) only engaged with marginalised groups after that group or the issue of their marginalisation had been politicised seemed to be a very passive response to the kind of political urgency that lay behind some of the early arguments in favour of greater engagement and of political agency. A personal knowledge of some of the often subtle ways in which, historically and currently, exclusion can happen, and of the historical fluidity of the boundaries of “mainstream” led to the conviction that there were potentially many instances of marginalisation that, though apparently minor, were in fact the domestic and quotidian manifestation of an injustice that later became politicised. This tension, between the mundane and the radicalised, begged the question of whether information curators could engage with marginalisation in different ways and using different opportunities to those presented in the literature. Finally, the generality of the call to recognise the archival role in the implementation, as well as the recording, of contemporary political ideology seemed to lose something in the particularities of the examples given. The majority of the articles that presented the responses to marginalisation featured archivists who had some professional or possibly personal connection with a marginalised group; this connection most usually was a responsibility for a collection that contained records of such a group. This pattern implied that archivists without an existing connection to a particular instance of marginalisation were in some way excused from engagement of this nature. At the same time the authors who first disrupted the idea that archives were politically neutral were much more general in their conceptualisation of political responsibility (for example, Brothman 1991, Harris 1997, Cook 1994 and 2001). It was their conceptualisation that was cited by the professionals who were attempting to respond to the challenge of greater engagement in practice. This tension between

the general and the particular seemed to invite questions about the need for more ways to make engagement with the social margins possible, so as to diminish any sense that it was somehow always someone else's responsibility. The apparent lack of comprehensiveness of application of the new ideas about the political nature of the archives undermine the not infrequent references in the literature to a "paradigm shift"; the shift seemed to remain incomplete and to invite further investigation. There seemed to be a potential research issue focused on whether or not the existing conceptualisation of "marginalised" could be elaborated to include a wider range of margins, and whether such an extended conceptualisation would have the potential to enrich the range of opportunities available to archivists and records managers to respond to "the margins".

The research had as its main focus the conceptualisation by professional archivists and information managers of 'marginality', as that concept was developed and refined in the professional literature, including the literature that recounted details of particular practices or experiences in practice. It is concerned with the practices, theories and responses of professionals working in official contexts (i.e., who work in or on behalf of a formal or institutional information management programme) rather than those of non-professionals who take up information management activities for social or political reasons. Recognition that some people exist on the margins of mainstream society and that their existence often involves deprivation and injustice is not, of course, a modern phenomenon, and neither are reflections by archivists or records managers on the interaction between the archives and the margins. Until about the mid-1990s, however, most such reflections focused on the presence and use of records of a particular group (e.g., women) in a particular archives. There were few (though certainly not no) reflections on the importance of there being a

professional response to the marginalised of society, or characterising a lack of response as negligence, rather than as irrelevant. Marginalisation and the importance of response to or engagement with its manifestations became a part of established or mainstream professional discourse from the early 2000s onwards, and it is from this time – roughly from the publication in 2002 of Verne Harris’ “The Archival Sliver” (Harris 2002) – that was the focus for this research. The research draws on Anglophone literature only. This is predominantly due to the practical limitation of the researcher’s linguistic abilities, and existing familiarity with the European Anglophone working environment. However, much of the initial presentation and refinement of the concept of marginalisation is in English (though strongly influenced by French philosophers) and a certain amount of material has been published in English that details views from or reflection on situations in non-Anglophone countries, without suggesting that, philosophically, there are significantly different theoretical trends.

This introduction has identified in broad terms two aspects of archives and records management practice that are of concern to this research: the engagement of the profession with the margins of contemporary society, and the importance of, but difficulties presented by, representation of routine “ordinary” life in a society’s archives through which margins are reflected, negotiated and operationalised. It has also outlined the temporal and linguistic boundaries of the research, and its focus on the professional archival and records management literature, rather than on activities in any particular practice, except as those practices were recounted in published form. The second section of Chapter 1 provides an overview of the development and refinement of a concept of marginality from the early 2000s, using as a framework a number of “mindsets” proposed by Terry Cook in a summary article on the changing

social role of the archives (Cook 2013). It then clarifies two terms used throughout the thesis – *information curator* and *liminality* – and presents the aim and objectives of the research.

1.2 Background and Context: The emergence of “marginality” as a concept in archives and records management

1.2.1 Re-framing of concept of archives

In 1938, *The American Archivist* published an article by Herbert Keith Fitzroy, on “The Part of the Archivist in the Writing of American Legal History,” (Fitzroy 1938) in which the role of the archivists is very clearly that of handmaiden. Having stated that legal history is correctly written by lawyers (rather than historians), Fitzroy assigns to the archivist the duties of ensuring the preservation of the records, and of rendering them available to the historian or other user. The ‘thrilling pace’ at which technology has developed has had one oversight only, in Fitzroy’s view, that of ‘a machine to determine what shall be saved’ (Fitzroy 1938, pg. 128) In the absence of such a machine, Fitzroy recommends coordination with ‘the lawyers, the judges and the legal historians’ to provide guidance to the archivists in ensuring that the ‘right’ records are retained, though he simultaneously implies that ‘right’ is relative: ‘The archivist will in any case be damned, but let him develop a philosophy which will condition him to accept it’ (ibid). In the same issue of this journal, Charles Gates’ article (Gates 1938) focuses on problems of administration of government records, particularly in relation to establishing centralised management of federal records in each of the United States and passing of necessary legislation to ensure this control was maintained. The *Journal of the Society of Archivists* was first published in 1955, and the earliest volume contains two short reports commenting on the recently-published Grigg Report (Jones 1955, and Jarvis 1955) Three years previously, a

committee had been established to make recommendations regarding how the government was to enact its 'inescapable duty' of preserving its records. In his review of the Grigg Report, Jones noted some of the challenges faced by a modern government in the management of the destruction or preservation of its records; these challenges included a significant increase in the number of records being generated, an activity facilitated by technology ('the typewriter and the duplicating machine'), and in addition, 'new materials and new forms of record.' 'Unless some steps are taken soon the problem of what to preserve will become unmanageable,' Jones states, also noting that the challenges of bulk had been faced for over a century already, and that new technology would continue to present challenges (Jones 1955, pg. 7). The first volume of *Archivaria* in 1975 contained, among others, an article about the problems of copyright legislation being insufficient in its response to technological changes that allow 'large-scale copyright infringements,' as well as a short article by Gordon Dodds (Dodds 1975) introducing the new publication as a guide to his (on his own admission, idealised) image of 'the compleate archivist.' In his vision, the archivist would contradict what Dodds called 'the ghosts of archives past': 'the passive curator, the historian manqué, and the librarian-one-step-removed.' In this, the archivist would be aided by the fact that 'the compleat archivist raids areas of skills and knowledge far beyond the traditional allotted confines.' The first volume of the *Records Management Journal* in 1989 published articles dealing with the difficulty of planning IT applications given the unpredictability of technological developments and an article by John McDonald reflecting on the impact of underdeveloped relationships between records managers and others – like data administrators and IT experts – upon whom the implementation of a retention schedule for an automated information system would depend (McDonald 1989).

Clearly, the same subjects of concern in much of the contemporary professional literature – the impact of technology, the passive or active role of the archivist and records manager – were of concern from the early days of publications on information management. These are only a few examples from the earliest editions of journals produced for and by archivists and records managers, and also indicate that practitioners in these areas did not focus entirely on the pragmatics of their work, but took time to reflect, via texts and correspondences to the professional journals, on bigger questions of how the profession interacted in, and was affected by, the wider world. At the same time, the greater proportion of articles in these journals were pragmatic and aimed at providing insight into new ways of doing traditional work, and into ways of responding to new challenges. In many instances, though, the themes remained much the same as the challenges that continue to face archivists and records managers: how to cope with a significant increase in the number of records being produced, how to cope with new formats, how to determine which records to retain, the impact of new technology, questions about what function the archivist or records manager should properly be performing.

Nonetheless, it is not difficult to see a qualitative change in the nature of reflection on archives and records management from the early 1990s, as these reflections were presented through professional literature. Perhaps the most obviously disruptive or invigorating factor for archivists and records managers was the increased ubiquity of personal computers in the workplace, the development of computer applications to automate processes and to contain records, and later the advent of social networking media. An equally disruptive and invigorating factor was also perhaps more of a slow-burning issue: what might be termed a philosophy ‘turn’ in information

management, that is to say, a self-conscious application of particular philosophies to the world and work of information management.

The philosophy (or more correctly, philosophies) in question was postmodernism, and the demands and insights thereof did not either require a response from the majority of archivists and records managers - unlike questions about, say, the status of e-mails as records - nor did they provide an easily-operationalised wisdom. Remote in terms of relevance as it may have seemed at the time, the introduction of postmodernist ideas into archival and records management theory had a profound effect, not necessarily because it was in some absolute sense 'right' but because it acted as a catalyst for continuing debate that drew out profound and sophisticated re-evaluation of all aspects of information management, within the profession. The author most commonly cited, and the one who most strongly influenced the leading writers on the subject in archives and records management, was Jacques Derrida, and his 1995 work, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. Postmodernism is not a single philosophy, but a general term used to refer to a number of schools of thought such as poststructuralism, that were themselves developed from the analysis by de Saussure and others of linguistics in the early twentieth century. While Derrida was possibly the philosopher most frequently cited in archival literature (although the "archive" in *Archive Fever* was not a literal one), the ideas and analysis of other philosophers were also influential either directly or indirectly; these others being Lyotard, Barthe, Baudrillard, de Certeau and Foucault.

The writings of postmodernist philosophers are complex, often prolix, and as a result it is a demanding undertaking to read and interpret them in light of archival and records management practice. It is a premise of this research that the new potential introduced into professional debate as a result of the application of postmodernist

ideas – especially that of the unavoidably political nature of professional work – is valid. The claim itself will not be re-argued, though the literature review reflects some of the debate at the time. It is also an assumption of this research that the claim of a “paradigm shift” that several writers refer to as having happened as a result of the application of postmodern philosophies to archival theory is also valid, albeit incomplete. This new and sometimes disruptive idea was in turn specifically discussed in relation to the importance of archives and records to people who are marginalised or excluded from contemporary society (or who have had a marginalised status in the past). It is this consequence of the “postmodernisation” of archives and records that is the focus for this research.

To begin with, then, what follows here is a very brief overview, based on authors within the profession, of some of the changes wrought by postmodernist re-evaluation of archival theory and practice. The literature review (Chapter 3) provides details of the writers through whom postmodernist ideas were introduced into professional discussion, were debated and refined.

1.3 Deconstruction of ‘the archives’

1.3.1 Deconstruction of professional paradigm in archives and records management

Cook was one of a number of archivists whose published reflections on the profession, and particularly of the significance of postmodernist philosophy for archival practice, were particularly influential from the late 1990s until his death in 2014. In an article reflecting on a 2011 conference entitled “Memory, Identity and the Archival Paradigm”, Cook proposed that archival paradigms over the last 150 years (from about 1863 to the date of his article) have gone through four phases, from juridical legacy, to cultural memory, to societal engagement to community archiving.

These phases are not sequential in the sense of one ending and the next following, but in the sense of having predominance (Cook 2013).

Cook acknowledges a difficulty in using the term 'paradigm', though the phrase 'paradigm shift' had become something of a cliché by the end of the mid-2000s due to its ubiquity within the professional literature. Cook notes that archival practice arguably does not have a paradigm, in the Kuhnian sense of having 'a formal (or at least recognized and acknowledged) system or mental model, of attitudes, beliefs and patterns'. In consequence he uses 'mindset' instead of 'paradigm' (Cook 2013, pg. 97). The literature review will give more detail about the texts through which proponents of postmodernist and deconstructionist ideas presented their interpretations and arguments, so what follows here, using the structure of Cook's four phases, is a brief overview of the aspects of the archival mindset that were challenged or in some way 'problematized' during what was frequently called the 'paradigm shift' in archival theory.

1.3.2 Judicial Legacy mindset

The earliest theorists on archival practice approached their subject in the context of governmental records, and the recommendation in the *Manual of Archival Administration*, that the archivist should focus on the 'Conservation of every scrap of Evidence attaching to the Documents committed to his charge' has been quoted more than once in the professional literature, often to demonstrate the positivist standpoint underlying early archival practice. That records were, and continue to be, used as evidence in a forensic sense is indisputable, and that apparently reliable records might turn out to be unreliable, either because they were forged or because the information contained in them was a lie, is also unremarkable. The elements that were questioned by the proponents of postmodernist philosophies, as well as

professionals working with some marginalized social groups, were the limitation of evidential value to textual records, and the assumption that records were able to tell some form of objective, neutral truth. It was this “mindset” that was predicated on an assumption that was central to Harris’ criticisms of archival practice – the assumption that all decisions about retention were made, not by the archivist who would then compromise their neutrality, but by state officials. In addition, this mindset focused on official records, and did not actively encourage engagement with private records or personal archives. In light of the introduction via postmodernist ideas of the problematic of power relationships, the way in which knowledge reproduces power relationships, and especially the way in which the choices made by archivists and records managers about what records would be kept was a mechanism through which knowledge was not just retained but created, it became more complicated to argue for records as uncompromised evidence.

1.3.3 Cultural Memory mindset

The ‘memory’ mindset is in many ways opposed to the evidentiary or judicial mindset, or at least in a state of ‘creative tension’ (Cook 2013 pg.102). In its initial manifestation, which Cook characterizes as arising after the Second World War with the rise of appraisal as a necessity, this paradigm or mindset focused on the deliberate creation of what would become the shared memory of society. In the course of this dominant activity, in Cook’s summary, the archivist essentially developed the archives under the guidance of academic historians. Although Cook suggests that this mindset was diminishing (or ‘showing its weakness’) by the 1970s, it was still strong enough to have been available for critical examination in the 1990s and later. Cook draws attention particularly to the way in which archivists and records managers will now engage actively in ‘society’s enduring memory materials,’

and in this manner they continue what he presents as a long-standing traditions of archival activity, arising from 'the need to commemorate, to celebrate, to symbolize,' their contemporary society. At the same time, the adoption of the 'memory mindset' may have other equally significant effects. A clear example is the acceptance of oral traditions from non-textual societies such as Australian Aboriginals and North American First Nations/Indigenous people as forensically-acceptable evidence. This achievement is indicative not just of a landmark in a legal process directed at specific long-standing injustices. It draws attention to the constructed nature of knowledge and of evidence, and reduced some of the automatic privilege that had been given to text-based evidence, a predominantly Western tradition. The reflections and discussions in the profession on the matter of memory also ensure that interpretations and analysis about memory in itself, in relation to archives, to individuals and to history, was drawn into the professional literature e.g., Cook and Schwartz, 2002, Ketelaar 2008, Brown 2013. Cook and Schwartz (2002) draw attention specifically to the shift from the "professional myth" of archival neutrality to an acceptance of archives as "active sites where social power is negotiated, contested, confirmed" (pg. 1). By extension they draw attention to the power that the archives, and the professionals responsible for them, have over the formation of memory and of identity, a power that is exercised through the processes of appraisal, arrangement and description. This is in the context primarily of written memory; though Schwartz and Cook (2002, pg. 18) refer to non-textual perpetuation of memory – "memory based on personal, shared story-telling" they do not indicate specifically how this kind of memory is constructed. Discussing memory in the context of power, Cook and Schwartz focus particularly the constructed nature of memory, reinforcing their view that the archives does not merely contain, nor the

archivist describe, memory but that both, in fact, contribute to its construction. In this the authors draw on historians such as le Goff and Lerner, as well as the writings of archivists and records managers. Ketelaar's focus is explicitly on memory as a component of social justice and post-conflict reconciliation. He highlights a particular kind of construction of memory and, importantly, of truth that occurs in legal circumstances such as the Nuremburg trials and the prosecutions undertaken by the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia that is less an expression of postmodernist philosophy than of the fact that "the truth is a legal construction" in such situations (Ketelaar 2008, pg. 10). What is peculiar to a legal situation is that the law "aspires to a degree of finality that neither History nor Memory do" because a trial must have a frame and a point at which it can be known to have ended (ibid, pg. 11). More than the processes of the archivist, Ketelaar notes how the interactions between users of any sort and the archives are themselves forms of construction of meaning and of memory: "each activation leaves fingerprints which are attributes of the archives infinite meaning" (ibid pg. 12). Ketelaar elaborates – though not explicitly - Schwartz and Cook's recommendation that the relationship between archives and the societies that create and use them be re-examined, in his proposal that archives become part of a commemorative process (ibid, pg. 13, drawing on Osiel 1997).

1.3.4 Societal Engagement (or Identity) mindset

Cook describes this as the 'postmodern' mindset in which the role of the archivist or records manager as a mediator was uncovered and acknowledged. This mindset moved definitely away from any positivist belief that there was an objective truth, that the records could show 'the way things were'. Instead, this mindset assumed that 'the archives' contained many stories and perspectives, and that the professional

choices made by those responsible for records had a role to play in creating, rather than simply retaining, knowledge. Cook uses 'identity' as a key word or characteristic of this mindset: both the profession's development of an identity connected with justice as well as with culture and academia, and the archives having a role in "aiding society in forming its own multiple identities"(Cook 2013 pg. 113).

1.3.5. Community Archiving mindset

The community archiving mindset is not, in Cook's view, yet finally formulated. It is a mindset that is strongly influenced by the possibilities of the internet and of social media for allowing individuals and groups, outside of formal institutions, to create their own archives. From the point of view of the archivist, Cook sees this as an opportunity to blend "our past foci on evidence, memory and identity into a more holistic and vibrant 'total archive'" (Cook 2013 pg. 113). The role of the professional will therefore have to change yet further, since the issue is not simply that a wider range and larger number of records and collections are being generated, but that the relationship between those who create and those who curate or take responsibility also changes. Community archives may, or may not, wish to maintain a relationship with a formal or professional archives, and the records, in whatever format they are created and retained, may never be brought over the threshold of an archival or formal institution. As with the introduction of postmodernist ideas to archival theory, the growth of community archiving will require professionals to re-visit, again, traditional ideas and assumptions about their role and the role of the record.

Chapter 5 draws out some of the responses to date from the profession to the "marginalised", and these include a strong reflection of Cook's final mindset, that of community archiving. As Cook points out, these mindsets overlap and are not separate, however, It is within Cook's penultimate mindset, that of societal

engagement, that this research is predominantly placed. Although Cook stated that the community archiving mindset is not yet complete, it is arguable that neither is the societal engagement or identity mindset. The archives having a role in “aiding society in forming its own multiple identities.” The formation of an identity always has aspects of inclusion and exclusion: there are characteristics by which individuals define – or have defined for them – groups to which they do or do not belong. Therefore, whether there is conflict or injustice involved or not, margins and the *fact* of marginality, whatever its consequences, are significant in the development of social identity.

According to Thomas Kuhn’s interpretation of the paradigm (Kuhn 1966), the paradigm shift occurs as a result of a crisis; some problem or disproving of a significant element of the existing paradigm, which requires radical reconsideration in order to be resolved. More specifically, the crisis is of nature that means it is no longer possible to pursue scientific research according to the existing paradigm. There is not, to date, any text in the professional literature that indicates what crisis within the archives and records management profession was being faced that led to so many postmodern ideas having a profound effect on the profession’s theory at that time – not earlier and not later. Even while the value or otherwise of postmodernist ideas was being debated, practice could and did continue exactly as before for many information curators, judging by the topics discussed in professional journals during that time. Arguably the application of postmodernist ideas to curation theory problematised the theory, rather than provided an answer to problems that had arisen organically due to insufficiencies or staleness of the theory itself.

From the early 1990s there had been considerable reflection on and discussion about fundamental aspects of archival practice, such as the definition of a record

(arising from the proliferation of non-traditional and especially electronic documents) or the changing role of the information curator. This instability may have made the professional audience as it were more receptive to postmodernist ideas, but postmodernism did not necessarily provide an answer for use in practice, rather it provided the vocabulary and the framework for the kind of discourse that could analyse and discuss such destabilising factors.

As will be mentioned in the literature review, the ideas of postmodernist archivists and records managers were not without their critics, but although there have been summaries of the most influential writers there has been no real examination of what event, series of events, or more subtle ideological changes that could have constituted a 'crisis' leading to what many called the paradigm shift.

Nonetheless, in the process of deconstruction – that is, by demonstrating or claiming to demonstrate the constructed nature of many aspects of life that have been or can be taken as 'real' or 'natural' - postmodernism provoked and provided vocabulary for debate about all aspects of the archives and records management profession.

What has remained is a wider and more complex range of questions being considered than had been the case twenty-five years ago. The Preface to a 2008 collection of essays on the nature of the archives notes that traditional archival theory does not normally have much to do with philosophical notions of any kind, and the Introduction to the same collection noted the change in 'intellectual activities focused on the archives' that can be demonstrated through the increase in interdisciplinary conferences (there having been one in England, Scotland and Wales in the same year) (Craven 2008 pg. 1). The groundwork that enabled the development of a professional field receptive to these ideas had begun well over 10 years previously. In 2005 a collection of essays that reflected many ideas not

extensively discussed within the profession prior to the 1990s, including 'the book's recurring emphasis upon the relationship between evidence and memory...including consideration of what may be termed Freudian constructs.' (McKemmish et al 2005 pg. iii). There are many other examples, both preceding and following these publications.

In addition, the ideas of postmodernist philosophers were introduced to the professional literature for archivists and records managers through a small number of writers, one of whom, Verne Harris, wrote from a specific, politicized environment, that of apartheid-era South Africa. This approach pushed forward the idea of a politicized archive, quite contrary to the more usual understanding of the archives as politically neutral. It was not uncommon, of course, to find that where groups of people had become politicized or radicalized, a connection was then made with the archives, a point that will be returned to in Chapter 6. An early example of this is the engagement of feminists with archives - the recognition that suppression of women was reflected in archival collections (through, for example, failure to collect women's records, the terms used to describe them or failure to properly catalogue them). They also sought in the archives those records that would, in their view, recalibrate the existing historical narrative and would provide evidence to contradict accepted views of female capabilities. This process of, as it were, archival rehabilitation has been undertaken by other marginalised groups for the same purpose of collecting records about particular groups, or ensuring that the records of a notable person from that group (e.g., a writer or politician) or notable events related to that group, are retained. One of the most fertile areas of theoretical engagement has been the political nature of the archives, as this has been one of the factors encouraging a reconsideration of more than one element of professional work, e.g., appraisal, and

how the valuing of records does not just preserve but creates knowledge, and how to diversify the contents of the archives, so as to ensure the presence of many 'voices.' This is not just the result of engagement with postmodernism, but also engagement with changes in user requirements (including historians who underwent a well-documented and sometimes polemical engagement with postmodernist ideas in the 1970s and 1980s) and with the contemporary political ideology. This is not an new idea, as it has been reasonably common for archival institutions to have, for example, an oral history programme designed to supplement the official records, and many collecting archives (as opposed to the archives solely of an institution or business) will have random personal deposits.

However, the interpretation of the political nature of the archives as articulated by Harris was quite different, and focused not on the politicized interpretation of records but on the active role played by records and their curators in implementing or maintaining political ideology. These new ideas were not, and are not, universally accepted and there was considerable, often vigorous, debate on all of the claims and counterclaims made. But in the last two and a half decades there has been an expansion of ideas about what constitutes a record that has long-term value (Caswell 2009), about how records of value are created, about how archivists and records managers can engage not just with a wider variety of users but of creators (Flinn *et al* 2009) and about where it is appropriate to have archives (Tough 2004). In particular, and arising from the re-conceptualizing of the archives not only as political but as a place in which power balances or imbalances were to be found, there was significant discussion of the archives of marginalized people, particularly in the context of the absence of records about, for example, ethnic minorities from mainstream archives.

However although there have been some initiatives in response to the challenging concept that the archives does not just reflect but is a manifestation of social power imbalances, there are ways in which this 'problematic' is incompletely unpicked, at least in its representation through the professional literature. There are two particular related questions that have not been comprehensively or systematically addressed: what is marginal, and how can it be recognised?

The literature on the subject includes many examples of marginalized or excluded groups of people, some obvious examples being women, racial or ethnic minorities, and gays and lesbians. No articles or books, produced within the profession, analysed what was meant by marginalized. In one way, perhaps such definition was redundant, since in the examples given, it would be difficult to *not* know the ways in which women, or black people or gays had been – and in some instances continued to be - excluded from full participation in contemporary life, by being denied rights accorded to other citizens. What is also obvious in the literature is that the record has been invoked after radicalization has happened: the archive is not the first to notice the absence from or the silence in its own space. Those who are marginalized in one generation may be lionized in another (actors in the eighteenth-century were regarded as little better than vagabonds and now actors have successfully run for public office, for example); those who are marginalized may themselves repress or marginalize within their own group (an early example being the 'double-colonization' of women). There have been, for example, instances where catalogued archival collections have been re-assessed to seek out records related to black people in Britain - this was one of the activities undertaken during the CASBAH (Caribbean Studies, Black and Asian History) Project in the United Kingdom during the 1990s and archives have also re-assessed collections to draw out previously disregarded

material such as “women’s” records of a domestic nature. What equivalents of these are currently being overlooked, because a particular group has not yet been politicized? If the archive (in the broadest sense) has a form of political responsibility, then this passivity seems questionable.

To attempt to address this challenge leads immediately to the second question – how can marginality, or voicelessness, be recognized before it is politicised? In some of the best known examples in the professional literature, particularly where the focus was on a manifestation of political or social injustice, the absence or exclusion from the archives, and the social imbalance that that exclusion reflected, was already foregrounded. The injustice had been named, as misogyny, racism, homophobia, and so on. In some cases the overall political situation was unstable, as was the case in South Africa in the last years of the apartheid regime or action was already being taken to seek redress of some sort, often where individuals draw public attention to past activities of institutions (e.g., a church, a school, a government) that were unjust. These situations are heightened, politically, with the two or more sides to the story being articulated publicly by the time the question of records, whether as evidence or for more personal use, is raised. Are there forms of marginality, or of exclusion other than those related to known, politicised situations, and if so, can exclusions and silences be identified before an extreme situation is reached?

1.4 Preliminary Clarification of Terms

1.4.1 Definition of an ‘information curator’

The phrases “information curator” and “information curation” are used throughout the thesis. The phrase was primarily intended to excuse the writer from the need to repeat “archivist and records manager” unless specifically only either one or the other was intended.

“Curator” has two additional advantages, however. It indicates a very broad sweep of responsibilities – the *Chambers* dictionary defines curator as “a person who has charge of anything; a superintendent...a person appointed by law as a guardian...” It also, due to common usage, has a strong existing relationship with museum work, and with the widely-shared activity of presenting an exhibition.

Consequently, “information curator” is used to communicate a broad scope of activities, or, rather, it is used to avoid communicating any narrowness or specificity of activities as might be implied by either *archivist* or *records manager*. Instead it can be understood to mean anyone who is required to, or does, take responsible action regarding any specific information. In addition, the term is not professionally in use for any of the range of activities, or any combination thereof, that are undertaken by professional archivists or records managers. This means that the term is not already loaded (or at least, not loaded very heavily) with expectations of the kind of work done, the kind of record under consideration, the audience to whom the curator is answerable or the standard to which the work is done. The term therefore can incorporate both the professional and the non-professional curator of information.

1.4.2 Extending Marginalization: Liminality

As previously noted in the Introduction, there has been regular recognition of the fact that mainstream society has historically marginalised, and continues currently to marginalise, groups of people for different reasons. Marginalisation is not an uncommon concept in political discourse and the politicisation of marginalised groups has occurred throughout history, as those disenfranchised in some way due to, for example, economic status, gender, race or age have sought redress. The constituents of the groups on society’s margins change over time, as the disenfranchised (e.g., lower-class men) are given certain privileges (e.g., voting

rights) and become part of the mainstream or establishment, while others (slaves, members of religious minorities) begin to seek redress to injustices and access to privileges (e.g., freedom from slavery or religious persecution). Similarly, members of mainstream society can become marginalised if there are radical changes in the political structures or power balances, or at times of social crisis when groups may be demonised based on race, religion, nationality, and so on.

Marginalization was therefore an active concept – people had been excluded, an action had been taken, an attitude had explicitly been manifested. Since this research was concerned with situations that had not been politicized and yet were understood to be political (that is, if it is understood that all situations subscribe to some kind of ideology, regardless of how familiar or dominant), then how should the difference be articulated?

This was an elusive idea and hard to pin down, either in terms of describing what it meant or in terms of giving concrete examples of the types of records. The core of it, the important characteristic was the lack of deliberate action: what was being referred to was those records that were routinely disregarded as unimportant and the mitigating activity fundamentally was to foreground these within ‘the archives.’ That these exclusions are not deliberate means in one way that they are not political, in the sense that they are not the result of a political or governmental decision or policy, nor are they the result of a prejudice that has been itself politicised. At the same time, they are – or can be – political, or subject to politicisation because they may be, on reflection, a way in which a currently-unrecognised hostility, prejudice or exclusion is happening. Such neglect may be making the archives into a place where a currently normalized prejudice – one that may be politicized in future years –

occurs. The political nature of what is currently unremarkable is sometimes opaque, and two examples may clarify.

In her part of the introduction to one of the earliest works of feminist literary criticism, 'The Madwoman in the Attic,' Susan Gubar describes her experience of being a female academic in 1973; at a time where she was not politically a feminist but where 'wives had to pay a steep price for wanting to work in the same fields dominated by *husbands*' (Gilbert and Gubar 2000, pg. xv11 emphasis in original). In summarising some of the comments made at that time, Gubar says 'Remember that old feminist device of the mental 'click' that you experience when you find yourself confronting what used to be called sexism?...I'd encountered a tap-dance worth of potential clicks...' There was no law to prevent women working in academia but there was custom that meant academic women were commonly regarded as a surprise or an annoyance. The 'click' responded to the action or statement that manifested sexism or misogyny without these attitudes being articulated, acknowledged or official, very often without the actor or speaker having the intention of being sexist, or being aware that they were being so. The actions or words to which Gubar's 'click' was a reaction could also be described as a micro-aggression. In his article "Introducing critical race theory to archival discourse: getting the conversation started" Dunbar offers what he describes as a simplistic definition of micro-aggressions as 'subtle forms or expressions of racism or bias' (Dunbar 2006, pg. 6). Dunbar's focus is racist micro-aggressions, but any form of 'bias' can be thus expressed. Although the casual misogyny encountered by Gubar and her colleagues were, in all of her examples, verbal, Dunbar notes of micro-aggressions that "It is in the non-verbal sense that micro-aggressions operate as thinly veiled, yet, well-embedded social conditionings and tacit social indoctrinators" (Dunbar 2006, pg.

116) The core value of introducing the concept of liminality into discourse about marginalization is that it can create a space for reflection on potential manifestations in ‘the archives’ of bias that has not yet been politicised and which may cause only a few people who are without agency in a given circumstance, to experience Gubar’s ‘click.’ In consequence, these biases may appear trivial, but, when accumulated, can reinforce that bias make it a ‘powerful social phenomenon.’

Throughout this text the word *liminal* is used, referring to records, or to people or to aspects of contemporary life. Literally, liminal means ‘of or related to a threshold or doorstep,’ and is used in in medicine and psychology to mean something that is barely perceptible. The threshold in question here is, of course, purely conceptual: records, or people, or aspects of contemporary life that are so familiar or banal, that they are hardly remarked upon. The terms *marginal* or *marginalized* can extend a long way, too, and do not always mean very extreme exclusion of individuals or groups. However, *marginalized* carries with in an implication of deliberate action, whereas *liminal* is more passive. Records such as ‘to-do’ lists or shopping lists can be read as having value beyond their operational use (McKenzie and Davis 2012) but at the same time, few people and few archivists would elect to keep them (unless they were already validated by the patina of age). These are not being excluded actively, but little value is attached to them. An example in terms of people is “outsider artists” (the English term being the equivalent of the original French “art brut”). Although originally, and occasionally in more recent years, the producers of “outsider art” were institutionalized due to mental illness or perceived mental incapacity, there were also many, like Henry Darger (1892-1973) or Helen Martins (1897-1976), who did not live in institutions and functioned within mainstream society. Their art was ‘outside’ the usual norms of art production. Apart from the

question of mental health or intellectual capacity, an outsider artist is not formally trained nor do they become familiar usually with art history or theory, or the workings of contemporary mainstream art world). Usually, their work was not recognized as art, even by the artist, until it was contextualised by someone with the knowledge (and therefore the power) to do so. Many works have subsequently been sold to collectors of art, and have been displayed in curated spaces (such as the Centre for Intuitive and Outsider Art, in Chicago). “Outsider art” therefore illustrates the passivity that is a characteristic of liminality, but also another characteristic that it shares with both liminality and marginalisation, that of mutability. The excluded status can change, and the border between mainstream and non-mainstream can shift. Thus, liminal is introduced as a term in order to differentiate between records, people and/or experiences, that are actively excluded from the archives or who are disadvantaged and situations where records, or people, or cultural or social activities are disregarded, subject to what Cook calls ‘benign neglect’ (Cook 2013, pg. 101).

Harris took up, from McKemmish’s 1996 “Evidence of Me” article, the significance of the personal archives. In his contextualization of his deconstruction of McKemmish’s essay, Harris reflects on ‘the other’ as referred to, or implied by, the writing of Derrida, what Harris describes as “heeding to the call of the other, more precisely of otherness” (Harris 2001 pg. 1). Harris elaborates further on “the structural resistance to closure”: “Every circle of human knowledge and experience is always already breached” by that which is first not known, but becomes known; “in everything known is the unknown, the unknowable the unarchivable, the other.” (Harris 2001, pg. 2) In a way, the *liminal* here refers to *the other*. But Harris’ other, derived from Derrida, is dynamic and always becoming; the *other* that breaches the circles of human knowing is “unnameable...an (un)certain divine particularity...a coming which must

always be coming.” In the context of this research, the trace of *the other* is being sought in the expectation that it can be engaged with at some level and therefore it must be at least a trace more concrete than Harris’ description.

A word was required to attempt to capture the same kind of non-specific *otherness* that was – to some degree at least – behind the appropriation of the word ‘queer’ for ‘queer theory’; one of the first writers to use the term ‘queer theory’ was Teresa de Lauretis. She subsequently ceased to use it because it was further appropriated by mainstream culture and having once been a term of abuse, it became domesticated, and sanitized. Liminal attempts to capture the aspect, as it were, of otherness, without defining its nature. Refining the concept of *otherness* was also informed by some of the ethnographic writing of Dorothy E Smith, specifically the importance that she attached to the everyday lived experience of people’s lives. Smith’s work and research aimed at creating a way of observing the powers, processes, and relations that organize and determine the everyday context (Smith 1987 pg. 9).

‘Liminal’ was chosen as a description, to try to emphasise that the difference was in intention. Histories of conflict, do not suggest that situations become openly politicised without some preceding indications of the presence of conflict. Assuming this to be correct, some at least of these signs may have been the records. The value of naming this difference will be if records are processed (for whatever purpose, in whatever context) with the expectation that there is always an *other*, then the presence of the *other* may be detectable by the information curator. This could enable information curation to be active rather than purely responsive with regard to identifying the *other* in the records. In addition, processing with this expectation could also extend the opportunities that curators, who were concerned about absences or lack of “voices” in the archives but who had no obvious route to engagement. A

value of liminality as a concept could be that it perpetuates an interest in the excluded and in otherness, even in an environment that is primarily concerned with information or text rather than people or social structures, in advance of that which was marginalized becoming if not mainstream at least an institutional presence, for example, through being represented in academia as a subject worthy of scholarly attention.

1.4.3 Some characteristics of liminal

The concept of liminality, as outlined above, is very abstract, though more specific than Harris'. Consequently, it may be difficult to describe the possible manifestation of "liminality" in an information curation context. Indeed, the nature of otherness and liminality does not lend itself easily to classification; to pin these aspects of existence down too firmly is to defeat the purpose of introducing them. Nonetheless, while it might not be possible to tabulate characteristics of liminality, records that contain reflections or traces of a society's liminal aspects may share certain traits.

In his article on the textuality of archives Andrew Prescott refers to "uncanonical" aspects of history which has prompted scholars to look at forgotten and neglected people and social phenomenon (Prescott, in Craven 2008, pg. 48). Prescott thus draws attention both to the people who create or are the subject of records, and also to the activities or phenomenon that give rise to, or are reflected in, records. Thus, that the records in question might be those of cultural producers who are not highly visible is an obvious characteristic and shared with the marginalised cultural producers mentioned above. Similarly, the records might be the insignificant product of activities or the products of insignificant activities. Alternatively, they may be the records of popular culture or "low" (as opposed to "high") culture. A textual metaphor can be developed from Bazerman's summary of how texts were lost over the

centuries: “[t]exts that did not become central to vibrant social systems existed in few and dispersed copies, and at times vanished” (Bazerman 2012 pg. 381).

Such records will share a generic characteristic of being “low-status” (in the context of whatever is the mainstream to which they are compared). This lack of status may be because the record is unmediated and therefore its status as a record may be questioned. It may be because the record is simply disregarded or neglected, as being too casual, too trivial or too mundane to be accorded any special value either to a business, a process (such as a court-case) or to society as a whole. Finally, the record in question may have a low status because it is related to or is created by a person or group who have a low status. Very often, such a person may be liminal to the mainstream of society, either because they are being marginalized through socio-political means, whether blatant or subtle, enforced on an individual or group basis, or because they wish to be liminal to society. The value placed on the person is then inherited by the records.

1.5 Aim and objectives of this research

1.5.1 Aim

This introduction has identified in broad terms two aspects of archives and records management practice that are of concern to this research: the engagement of the profession with the margins of contemporary society, and the importance of, but difficulties presented by, representation of routine “ordinary” life in a society’s archives.

The focus of this research is aspects of practice of information management with respect to a number of points inherent in the deliberations of, for example, Cook, Harris or Hedstrom. It accepts the arguments posited in the professional literature that, by the choices made in regard to appraisal or retention of records, information

curators have an active role in creating the knowledge available to posterity, and that their role as information curators are not politically neutral, as decisions about retention, access and so on will often mean that the power relationships within contemporary society will be replicated in the remaining records. There has been considerable reflection by information curators, as evidenced by the literature on the subject, on the causes and consequences of, and remedies for, neglect, exclusion or absence from records. The aim of the research is to propose an extension to the conceptualisation of marginality as that has been developed within the professional literature, and proposing a way, additional to those already proposed by archives and records management professionals, in which this enhanced conceptualisation could enable more effective or comprehensive engagement by practitioners with the margins of contemporary society: with records, and the creators of records, that do not usually or easily fall within the remit of institutionalized information curation.

1.5.2 Objectives

In pursuit of its aim, the objectives were to engage critically with the professional literature that was the site of the ideological reassessment of archival theory under the influence of postmodernist philosophies. This critical engagement focused specifically on the problematisation and politicisation of the archival relationship with marginalisation.

In doing so, this critical engagement will achieve a second objective, that of identifying the kinds of marginalisation that became the foci of discussion. The objective here is not summarising instances or examples, but drawing out (where they are not explicitly stated) the characteristics of the interpretation of marginalisation as documented in the literature.

The third objective is to analyse the professional literature, augmented where required by academic literature from relevant professions (detailed in the literature review in Chapter 3), in order to determine whether there are areas in which professional analysis could be developed. This analysis will be the basis of the development of an additional possible mechanism for engagement with marginalisation.

This thesis will attempt to answer the two questions posed on page 28: Are there forms of marginality, or of exclusion other than those related to known, politicised situations, and if so, can exclusions and silences be identified before an extreme situation is reached?

This chapter has provided some definitions of terms used, and outlined the aims and objectives. Chapter Two will present the research methods, and Chapter Three the literature review, broadly divided into four themes. Awareness of the question of exclusion from the archives for whatever reason has been evident in the profession for over twenty years, and there have been a number of ideas and initiatives in response. Chapter Four will present the texts that were the source of data for an analysis of how the profession engaged with the marginalised – either people or records – in the course of their professional lives. Drawing on these two chapters, Chapter 5 proposes a number of characteristics of marginality, as they emerged from the data, and Chapter 6, similarly, proposes characteristics of the responses – that is, the means by which engagement with the marginalised was achieved – of the profession. In Chapter 6 the first part of the aim of the research is presented; drawing also on the analysis of the data in the preceding two chapters, a reconceptualization of marginality is proposed. Chapter Seven puts forward an argument for the value of pluralizing the philosophical or critical approach to archives

and records management as a means of embedding awareness of and response to the on-going challenges of presence in or absence from the archives. In conclusion, Chapter Eight summarises the arguments and outlines some of the possible implications or consequences of a further shift in the archival paradigm.

Chapter Two: Research Methods

2.1 Research Paradigm

“Inquiry paradigms define for enquirers what it is they are about, and what falls within and outside the boundaries of legitimate inquiry” (Guba and Lincoln 1994 pg 105). Guba and Lincoln offer three questions, the answers to which, they state, will summarize the basic beliefs that define the inquiry paradigm being used. The questions are related to ontology (what is the perceived nature of reality), epistemology (what is the perceived relationship between the knower and what can be known), and to methodology (how does an inquirer approach finding out what can be known); the authors propose that the ultimate question depends on the answer to the penultimate question, and the penultimate on the answer to the first. In adapting these questions and presenting them as a table, Pickard adds *purpose* (Pickard 2007, pg. 7). According to the characteristics for each of the methodologies (positivism, post-positivism and interpretivism), the current research fits most with the latter. At the same time, it is not an exact fit; the purpose is not just to understand or reconstruct but to interpret with a view to posing questions that may challenge practice; the ontological stance is relativist in the sense of believing in constructed multiple realities but also in the existence of a shared social reality (or experience).

The source and nature of the data to be used in research affects how the research is performed. Within the paradigms offered by Guba and Lincoln, the methodologies are “[modified] experimental and manipulative,” “dialogic and dialectical” (critical theory) and “hermeneutical and dialectical” (constructivism). Their analysis of the development of these methodologies demonstrates an overlap between critical theory and constructivism as both methodologies are “aimed at the reconstruction of previously held constructions” with the latter having broader assumptions about the

degree to which this reconstruction occurs during interaction between investigator and respondent (Guba and Lincoln 1994, pg. 112).

In the context of Guba and Lincoln's analysis, then, this research has strong features of the methodologies of both critical theory and constructivism. The description of the interpretivist epistemological stance – which is that the investigation depends not on the engagement between the subject and the investigator, and are not an objective observation of things “as they really are” (Guba and Lincoln, 1994 pp 107 – 110) - that the results of the investigation are a product of the interaction between the subject and investigator” requires closer explanation in the context of this research, as the interaction is mediated via text (discussed below) rather than data newly-collected from individuals, which seems a more usual type of data. Meaning, or at least textual meaning, arguably is not finite, open to a single interpretation, but rather is generated by the author's intention in writing, the text produced, and the engagement of the reader with the text (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea 2006).

Within an interpretivist paradigm, the research is qualitative and not quantitative, and uses, where appropriate, methodological practices from different areas of investigative endeavour. At the same time, it was a certainty that this research would not produce a graph or a chart, but rather a descriptive narrative – “Words! And lots of them” (Pickard, 2007, pg. 245)

Even if there are aspects or characteristics of interpretivism that are not obviously applicable to this research, fundamentally it is within this paradigm that the research lies. In characterizing the “trademarks” of an interpretative orientation, Patchirat includes openness (Patchirat 2004, pg. 378) and some of these at least are applicable to the current research work. This complexity and even “messiness” is

something that the research engaged with without necessarily resolving, for example, in the case of ambiguities.

Part of the aim of the work was to gain an understanding of the complexities of professional theory and practice in relation to neglected or excluded records and people, and also to gain an understanding of the (most influential) facets of the world of the liminal, excluded or neglected record. Much has been written within and without the profession on issues to do with exclusion and absence from the archives but “One can know many unrelated pieces of information, but understanding is achieved only when informational items are pieced together” (Kvanvig 2003, pg 192). Part of the research was about achieving enough understanding of the separate factors which, it seems to the researcher when considering the question of exclusion and liminality, all are part of the circumstance and need to be considered if problematizing the situation and seeking change in practice. Seeking to understand the separate constituent elements will enable the researcher then to articulate the relationships between them, so that any issues that seem to require corrective action or resolution can be approached with a subtle and faceted understanding. To understand, rather than to know, does not lend itself to apprehension of individual facts or pieces of data - “understanding requires the grasping of explanatory and other coherence-making relationships in a large and comprehensive body of information” ((Kvanvig 2003, pg 192) and “[i]t has to cope with ambiguity, contradiction, missing information, and all the other messy features present in real-world information collections” (Bawden 2012 pg 148)

Qualitative research has been variously associated with examining “opinions, feelings and values....behaviour patterns” (in social sciences and anthropology respectively) (McMilan and Meyers 2000 pg. 123). Qualitative research seems often

to be associated with engagement with the personal responses of individuals or groups, and the methods associated with it are usually those that depend on direct collection (as in surveys) or apprehension (as in action research or ethnographic research) of the personal opinions and views of people.

In introducing qualitative research, in the Handbook to same, Denzin and Lincoln (1994, pg 109) describe the development, and the multi-faceted nature, of qualitative research which, during what they call the “blurred genres” stage of development, incorporated interpretative perspectives and led to the development of the researcher as *bricoleur*, “learning how to borrow from many different disciplines”. The editors summarize the complex historical development of qualitative research, and the relationship between the humanities and social sciences, in that development. Using the methods of different modes of research is a way of trying to achieve a clear – or deep – understanding of the object of study, rather than claiming that some objective reality has been captured, or can be represented in an absolute and unambiguous way.

In discussing this approach, not as triangulation but as crystallization, the editors give an example of the depiction of a particular instance of racial tension, a depiction wherein the points of view, interpretation and experience of each different affected actor was represented. With regard to this research, the ultimate end is not to reflect a faceted reality or to articulate the “voice” of any particular actor in relation to any particular event, by means of this kind of crystalline interpretivism. Rather, the intention is to use the same approach to identify the variety of different locations in which these voices may be found, and how the professional information curator can engage with these presences.

2.2 Research design

As outlined in Chapter 1, the aims and objectives of this research focus on the theory that underlies and informs professional archival and recordkeeping practice, and on possible ways in which this theory could be further enriched for the benefit of professionals wishing to engage with less accessible people and records by an extended conceptualisation of “marginality”. The focus is essentially the implicit theoretical positions taken by information curators with regard to how marginality is conceptualised, and the refinements of and responses to these positions. The proposed outcome is also in the area of theory – that is, it is proposing enrichment of the theory upon which the profession bases its practice. The body of literature published for and by professional information curators was the main site for this debate, and where debate and refinement happened elsewhere – at conferences, for example – it is through the publications arising (if any) that they continue to be accessible. The foregrounding of the political neutrality or otherwise of the archives and the problematising of the profession’s engagement with marginalised groups were not matters that were of universal practical concern, unlike, for example, the advent of personal computers and the mutating multiplicity of new formats. The issues raised and sometimes profound changes to the professional paradigm were most usually presented in the literature as being prompted by literature rather than by practice; that is to say, authors such as Harris, Cook, Schwartz, Brothman, MacNeill or Hedstrom contextualise and build their arguments by referencing other authors, not practice or practical demands that they have encountered. Practice and practical demands may inform and refine the arguments; this too is done through text. The focus of this research was on aspects of the practice of information management, on what is done and what is not done by professional information

curators. To apprehend this would require either that practice be observed or that it be described in text. The thesis is aimed at questioning archival and records management theory in the Anglophone world, and not at individual practice, or practice in individual countries. To directly observe practice in enough institutions to provide that breadth of information would, for one person, be impractical. In addition, it would be, if exhaustive enough, potentially more work than it was worth. What is not being done by information curators is, for this research, almost more important than what is being done, and to explain or demonstrate an absence could not be done by direct observation and would have to be deduced from texts in any case (collection policy or retention schedules, for example).

2.3 Overview of texts used

The data used for the research, therefore, was already available, through the literature produced by information curators and, where necessary, from other professions touching on relevant subjects. The method used was a critical engagement with the texts produced by those proposing theoretical viewpoints and those responding to these proposals, including those responding through an account of some practical application of theories or philosophical viewpoints.

The literature exploited was that which focuses on what information curators present and theorise about themselves and their practice. There was some use also of the professional literature of related professions such as libraries and museums.

Given the suitability of a text-based approach to the topic and aims of this dissertation, the primary texts for the research (both as literature and as data) were drawn from the published literature of the archival and records management professions. In some specific and limited contexts, writings from outside the profession were also included. Primary texts were those through which the

deconstruction of archival theory was proposed and debated, those in which marginality was described or discussed, and in which responses to, or opportunities to engage with, marginality of some description were described (based on past experience or events) or proposed.

Secondary texts provided additional analysis; these were drawn from the wider world, that is, from outside the arena of professional information curation. They were texts that analysed issues relevant to the research questions, but were not necessarily focused on archives or records management environments but rather on the nature of particular aspects of these issues. These texts included orality in general, rather than specifically in the context of information curation, and similarly analysed issues of marginality and liminality in society, and the boundaries between the edges and the mainstream; of knowledge and power, rhetoric and the building of accepted narratives or stories based on evidence.

2.4 Methodological details

As mentioned above (2.2) some consideration was given to alternative methods of research (e.g., surveys/interviews) but these were rejected in favour of text-based research. From the earliest stages of the research, it seemed clear that at least some of the issues related to active and disadvantageous marginalisation had received sustained attention. In particular, the focus of attention had been on those instances where there was at least an aspect of injustice or inequality intrinsic to the marginalised state. What had received scant attention is what is identified in this research as the more quotidian or banal forms of marginalisation. Therefore the citations and references available through texts published in the professional journals were likely to require augmentation and in the initial stages of the research, the possible sources of this augmentation were unclear. Searches using the same

terms as were used in searching the professional literature were performed in academic publications related to libraries, museums and business, as well as other professions concerned with interpretation of social activity, such as anthropology and sociology. Any publication identified in searches through archives and records management professional publications that proposed a new or unexpected means for analysing or interpreting professional activity was examined for possible citations; for example texts on performance or performativity, genre or speech-act theory. For a period of the research the list of material that had potential in terms of being relevant and informed was enormous, and its management in the context of the topic being addressed and the time available became important. At the same time, samples of available material from both academic and professional literature were read before particular lines of research were laid aside. This was done by selecting small number of the articles identified through the means described above, and reading them in order to get a sense of not just of the theme or questions of that article, but of the context in which the author placed their work. This process allowed achieving a sense of the discourse and interests of research in that particular area, and how much background research would be required in order to determine if further research in this area would answer the research questions of this thesis. The areas tested and laid aside in this manner are indicated in Section 7.2.

The reasons for rejection, where research value was initially perceived, were one of two. The topic was being recognised as being suitable for research projects in their own right, rather than supplementary to this one (such as deeper investigation into orality, oral traditions, and “marginal” orality such as gossip or rumour). Alternatively it was because it was recognised that material valuable as an introduction to what was for the researcher unfamiliar territory did not necessarily need to be presented in

the thesis. This material was predominantly, but not exclusively, published in journals that were not, in the main research, used, such as *Journal of Popular Culture*, *Current Anthropology*, and *Journal of Peasant Studies* (Appendix 1 lists these journals). Arguably, any one of these could contribute important insights into answering the research questions, but if the specialism (e.g., ethnography) was very unfamiliar to the researcher then further research in that area was unachievable within the limitations of time. In addition, the rejection of these potential lines of enquiry helped to formulate what kind of framework was likely to be most successfully applied: a framework that did not require the information curator to have any especial talents or personal interests other than in records (of any medium).

This, in general terms, was how material for both the literature review and the data was selected. More specifically, it was an iterative process based on keyword-searching through library databases and through the search engines used by the publishers of the relevant journals, such as Sage, Wiley, JSTOR as well as the searchable indices on the websites of the core professional journals (where available). As mentioned above, some texts on these topics – in particular, the critical evaluation of professional theory and the application of postmodernism – were already known through routine reading of professional publications (see Section 2.4.2 – 2.4.3, for an overview of key texts both for the literature review and those used as a source of data). There were two ways of exploiting these for further reading: one was to draw out load-bearing vocabulary to use as future search terms, and the other was to follow up citations from the bibliographies provided. Both of these methods were used.

2.4.1 Method of searching

A list of search terms was developed (see Appendix 2). Since some of the terms (such as margin* or archiv* or record) are so widely used in so wide a range of contexts, though a large number of results were often returned in searches, a percentage of these were not relevant and had to be excluded. In the very first stages of the research, the results being returned from searches on such words were thousands. The keywords were either encountered in texts (particularly as more recent articles specifically include a list of keywords) and re-used, or they emerged during the course of writing notes or developing the text and were adopted as keywords for searching.

Details of search results were exported to Ref Works and separately a spreadsheet collating bibliographic details was maintained. Where possible, the abstract was used to assess the relevance of the article, otherwise (where no abstract was available) the article was read. In the interests of managing the time available, no notes were taken where there was no relevance whatsoever. For material that was considered at some point to be relevant, notes were taken in separate documents. These notes were more or less systematic but the level of detail included depended on the characteristics of the article (especially how relevant it was). The notes were also the opportunity for an initial reflection – often tentative and casually expressed – on the article and its likely influence on the research questions. Though some of these notes are hard-copy only, an electronically-created example is given in Appendix 3.

Chapter 1 referred to the passive form of marginality, that which is the point of difference between the characteristics of one group that differentiates it from another group, without that differentiation being either disadvantageous or judgemental. In

addition to these two types of marginality, there are people who wish to be on the margins. This preference is sometimes as a rejection of *mores* that are unacceptable to them, and sometimes because some will find the margins and boundaries much richer and more rewarding than mainstream society; not necessarily as a rejection, but because the liminal state is one that attracts them or because they feel that a greater understanding of the world in which they live can be achieved at a distance.

Taken as a whole, the material used was selected in order that the sources used be multivocal – “comprised of [*sic*] all accessible writings on a common...topic” that between them will “embody views or voices of a diverse set of authors (academics, practitioners...)” (Ogawa and Malen 1991 pg 265). At the same time, the emphasis is on texts produced by professionals and for professionals, and the development of professional theory and paradigms of practice. The views or experiences of people whose lives may be marginal, or the subject of exclusion or injustice are not reflected.

2.4.2 Identification and selection of texts

A number of authors draw attention to the important contribution that academics, researchers and commentators have made to opening up the definition of “archives” and in providing insights into problematics such as knowledge, power, memory, and the significance of space and location (Schwartz 2009, pp 7-8). However, to extend the range of journals to all those that reflect on archives and their cultural or political significance would extend the potential bibliography to unmanageable lengths. In addition, and more importantly, the interpretation of “the archive” in many sources outside of the profession was much more fluid and metaphysical (e.g., Steedman, 2002), and did not take cognizance of the way in which information curators work in their environments, and the network of responsibility, resource, power balances and

expectation in which information curators and the records for which they are responsible fit within organisations or businesses. This, and the fact that the material is not written by or for information curators, will lessen its impact on the development of information curation theory.

Both the "data", the material that provides the data for this research, and the "literature", the material used to develop the conceptual and contextual framework in which the research took place, were those works written by professional archivists or records managers on any relevant aspect of marginality for an audience of fellow-professionals. This material was primarily in the form of articles, submitted to professional peer-reviewed journals. In the case of the literature, material was also drawn from academic or professional peer-reviewed journals from outside the area of information curation.

For pragmatic reasons, attention has been limited to articles in English, which means that the majority refer to practice in the Anglophone world. Although searches were performed widely, the majority of the material, both data and literature, relied upon was published in one of six leading professional journals: *Archival Science*, *Archivaria*, *The American Archivist*, *Archives and Manuscripts*, *Official Journal of the Archives and Records Association* (formerly, this was the *Journal of the Society of Archivists*), or the *Records Management Journal*. Journals from other professions (e.g., *Journal of Documentation*, *History and Theory*) were drawn on as secondary sources, where there was more information on certain topics (e.g., on marginalisation or oral cultures).

As a body of relevant material was built up, a broad classification scheme was developed, in order to group together texts based on the section of the thesis to which they were felt to be most relevant (Appendix 5).

Inevitably, during the course of research and of producing the text, areas of interest had to be excluded in order to manage the scope of the research, so some journals that had been used as secondary sources are no longer directly referenced.

The process of exclusion was based primarily on relevance, and had more than one iteration. In the first instance, articles and books were identified in searches but it was clear from the title or abstract that they were irrelevant to the research. This was either because the search term meant something different in the context of the retrieved article or book than its meaning in the context of the research, or because the article focused on an aspect of theory or practice that did not inform this research in any way. An examples of the multiple uses of terms include the fact that “margin*” refers not only to a sociological phenomenon or other instance of marginality or exclusion, but can refer literally to the margins on a page as a subject of research. Equally, “archive” can be used in non-specialist ways to mean an off-line storage area for non-current electronic records and it can also be used metaphorically or as a framework for reflection on subjects other than an actual archives, as in Steedman’s *Dust* (Steedman 2009) or Burton’s *Archive Stories* (Burton 2006). In other cases, texts touching more specifically on the subjects being researched, focused on an aspect that was not of concern here. This was because, for example, a text looked at the role of records or archives in society but from a very practical point of view, such as discussing reader services or improving access, or presented a case study to illustrate a point or a response to a point.

2.4.3 Key or Canonical authors or texts

For the literature review, that is to say, the texts that laid out the radical re-evaluation of archival theory, and those that presented the main features of the current

theoretical landscape, the key authors are those who engaged most directly with the postmodernist philosophical writing.

Of all of the postmodernist philosophers whose views on language and meaning, and whose use of “the archive” as a conceptual framework for their discussion of memory or power is of relevance to the archives and records management professions, Derrida is drawn upon most often. Of all of the archival theorists to engage with postmodernist philosophy and with Derrida in particular, Harris’ engagement has been the most sustained. Brothman does engage directly with Derrida’s writing in the context of the lack of interest in Derrida’s work to be found among archivists, and in demonstrating Derrida’s relevance for the profession. Where Harris’ slant has been towards the articulation of power relationships and the relevance of this for analysis of the role of records and their curators in denial or enforcement of social justice (e.g., Harris 1997, 2002), Brothman’s focus is more on the “intimate tension” of the relationship between archives and deconstruction (Brothman 1999). Nesmith (2002) addresses the ideas and influence of Derrida directly and includes a bibliographic guide to fellow-professionals writing on Derrida and postmodernism, in addition to reflecting on the particular aspects of archival theory and practice that face challenge from postmodern ideas. Cook, like Dodge (1997, 2002), is particularly concerned with the impact of digital records on the profession’s theoretical paradigm and predicts the emergence of a new and much-needed archival paradigm not only from “radical changes” within the profession but also from the impact upon archival theory of philosophical, cultural and other trends in wider society (Cook 1997). Ketelaar, like Harris, reflects on post-conflict situations but draws postmodernist sensibilities into reflection on the role of records in collective memory or memorialisation (Ketelaar 2008, 2012) and on the importance

of deconstruction in making explicit the otherwise “tacit narratives” in all aspects of ‘the archive’ (Ketelaar 2001).

Though an indication of the ‘key’ authors should not be understood to be finite, these authors between them most effectively explicated the possible relevance and benefit of postmodern philosophy to archival and recordkeeping theory. They also laid much of the groundwork for subsequent reflection and investigation into topics such as power and the record, metanarratives and bias, and the replacement of Jenkinson’s disinterested professional with a paradigm of engagement and interpretation.

The work of other writers, who engaged less directly with postmodernist philosophies and more with the implications thereof for records and archives, was indispensable in sustaining discussion and debate that embedded and normalised disruption to conceptions of professional political neutrality. Significant theorists in this area are McKemmish (1995, 2005, 2012) Kaplan (2000, 2002), Schwartz (2000, 2002).

In the context of this research there is something of a false division between those who wrote what is here part of the literature review and those who wrote texts that were sources of data. Several writers wrote both, particularly Brothman and Cook. In the same way, a different researcher with a different line of enquiry would find other “literature review” authors also producing “data” texts, e.g. Ketelaar if the area of research was silences or absences in the record or Dodge on memory. Similarly, writers that are not heavily relied on here would become canonical in research taking up a different emphasis, e.g. focusing on particular situations of conflict (Caswell 2012, Adami and Hunt 2005), on particular concerns such as postcolonialism or black lives (Bastian 2006, Bressey 2006), or on responsibility that records and their curators were seen to have towards achievement of some kind of justice (Hurley on accountability, Caswell on human rights abuses).

Similarly, there were texts that articulated the value of counter-culture that led to the consideration of the *counter-archives* as an appropriate response to exclusion. If a result of postmodernist ideas is the engendering of an “incredulity toward a metanarrative” (Cook 2001 1984 pg. xxiv, citing Lyotard) as well as “hospitality toward the ‘other’” (Harris 2002 pg. 23), then an end-result might be that each archives contains its own counter-archives. Speculation on how the familiar might be made unfamiliar is difficult and illustration came, more often than not, from outside the profession. It may be too much to describe these texts as canonical, as they are illustrative and suggestive of a way of thinking rather than necessarily applicable specifically to information curation. In addition, they have not been through a process of debate and comparison to more thoroughly test their value as a source of guidance, though nonetheless, they had illustrative value. These texts were from the art world, and some are referenced briefly in 7.2.1 in the sense that modernist visual and literary art disrupted two of the most familiar ways of presenting a narrative. In addition to the authors cited (Brettell and Cox), the writings of some contemporary artists and academics were also of value in making familiar ideas of de-familiarisation; in particular Smith *On Walking* (Smith 2012), or Solnit’s *A Field Guide to Getting Lost* (Solnit 2006). Smith writes extensively on walking as a disruptive art form, as well as on peireomology (seeing meaningful things, such as faces, in random shapes) and on decontextualized signifiers such as road-signs. Solnit’s work on landscape foregrounds the value of an intellectual approach that embraces, rather than resolves, what is usually seen as a negative or undesirable state, that of failing to remain on a known path, of getting lost. In this, her idea echoes that of Brothman’s comments, in reflecting on order and disorder, about the difference between spilled ink and writing (Brothman 1991 pg. 80). These two authors (that is,

Smith and Solnit) are not quoted, but their writing about defamiliarisation and of resisting the temptation to resolve apparently or arguably negative situations, were valuable.

To identify these writers as being key to the introduction of postmodernist ideas to curation theory is not to claim that they were the first to propose disruptive or challenging ideas to archival theory. Their impact may be more that their reflections found, for whatever reason, a more receptive audience; less that their ideas were absolutely new and more that their time had come. Chapter 1 notes a number a practitioners who challenged the profession's existing narrative of neutrality, such as Ham, Warner and Zinn; a writer who wrote consistently on possibilities for re-imaging and re-interpreting archives was Taylor (e.g. 1984, 1993).

2.4.4 Engaging with the texts

The material that acted as an introduction both to the literature and the data was encountered prior to the start of the research, as part of routine professional reading. This material, published in professional journals, presented or discussed professional engagement with marginalised groups, reflections on the role of the archivist or records manager, or analysed the profession through the lens of postmodernist or other philosophies. Once a formal research programme was embarked upon, these articles were re-visited, for the purpose of following up the citations and the bibliographies. This activity served as one starting point for identifying relevant material.

Having selected the texts to be used both as primary and as secondary sources, the most effective means of analysing them was developed. In some of the background literature available on research methods, the literature review is presented as the initial stage of the research, intended to ensure that the researcher is familiar with

relevant theories and schools of thought, prior to initiating a data gathering exercise. The data gathering then takes place, in the context of the theoretical perspectives developed by the researcher, and the research proceeds on that basis. Pickard includes as “essential components” of qualitative research, following the literature review and development of a theoretical framework, “fieldwork in a natural setting, using a human instrument, purposive sampling, appropriate data collection techniques” and others (Pickard 2007, pg. 15). This research did not follow that pattern, as the data being used was that which is available through the literature. The matters under examination were not a mandatory concern for information professionals; it was possible to function in that capacity without giving thought to voicelessness. The area of concern in this research was the theory and rhetoric underlying professional practice, specifically the conceptualisation of marginality, and the professional literature is a site for the development of that theory, the familiarisation of the profession with certain rhetoric and discourse, and the development of concepts. Thus, the literature itself becomes the source of data for research. Therefore certain stages of the research process – fieldwork, data collection – do not have the same relevance here.

On the other hand, neither is the research intended to produce a survey or summary of the arguments and concepts presented in the literature. The texts were not being exploited purely to apprehend either the narrative or the analysis presented, although these elements were important. Neither were they to be analysed, as is the remit of literary criticism, in terms of their value to and meaning for wider society. While it was not assumed that any of the texts presented an objective or absolute reality, neither could they be regarded as literature in the sense of fiction. It was recognised that all of the texts – whether reflective and philosophical or descriptive of

past events – employ rhetorical devices; analysis of these was not of value to this particular research. What was being investigated were the assumptions and interpretations that underlie the practice of information curation; these assumptions and interpretations are manifested, or performed, in various acts of information curation undertaken, and promulgated through training and education of professional curators. So the source and nature of the information used for this research was entirely textual – it came not from a face-to-face engagement between researcher and investigator, but from close analytical reading of the texts that practitioners produced to describe and reflect on their practice. Naturally, reading a text is not a neutral activity – “a document is a witness and like most witnesses it rarely speaks until one has questioned it” (Marwick 1985 pg. 387).

In his article “Making Sense of Making Sense” Jackson analyses what he calls the problem of “double hermeneutics” (Jackson 2006). By “double hermeneutics” he means when a researcher is interpreting the actions or words of historical actors, who themselves are interpreting political or cultural circumstances, using rhetoric, and interpreting others’ use of rhetoric. Each party – the researcher and the subject of research – have an hermeneutic “circle” in which they function; the example that Jackson uses is an instance of conflict between the German Chancellor and the Chair of Social Democratic Party in the Bundesdag in 1949 which Jackson calls a “legitimation struggle” that was “an emblematic and significant moment in the history of post-war German reconstruction” (Jackson 2006, pg. 265). In order to tackle the difficulty of the double hermeneutic in relation to this legitimation struggle, Jackson proposes three analytical tasks: delineation of the cultural resources, discussion of the specific histories, and tracing the deployment of the available cultural resources (Jackson 2006 pp 271 – 272). The mechanism that he proposes for the first of these

tasks is “textual ethnography”, which he describes as “a careful reading of the written traces of social practice” (Jackson 2009 pg. 272). Jackson is writing particularly in relation to views in conflict; he writes of “opposing sides” and the parties having to “struggle” with the meanings of words, and this sense of conflict is not present (apart from briefly) in the re-analysis of archival theory in light of postmodernist philosophies or in the development of a concept of marginality. What are present, and what developed meaning in the course of this line of discourse, are what Jackson calls “commonplaces” – terms used that are not indeterminate, and may need explanation or elaboration, but which can influence rhetoric and make arguments possible. Jackson accepts that there is no single way to uncover commonplaces and their relationships to each other and states that it is useful to develop a “rhetorical topography” as an interpretive tool to achieve this explication of meaning and relationships. The mechanism that he proposes to develop this rhetorical topography “might be best characterized as a form of ‘textual ethnography’”. He describes this as a form of “disciplined reading” but he specifically draws attention to the active nature of the researcher’s role, which he describes as “a kind of ‘participant-observation’ of the records” (Jackson 2006 pg 273), in which the researcher takes the equivalent of field-notes to record “one’s developing sense of the rhetorical commonplaces being deployed in the situation” (Jackson 2006 pg 273). A subsequent systematisation of these field notes “will tend to produce a rhetorical topography (Jackson 2006 pg. 273). This research was not intending to develop a full-scale “rhetorical topography” in relation to the re-analysis of archival theory, the emergence of arguments about neutrality and so on, but central to the research is the development of the “commonplace” of marginality, what it came to mean, how it was interpreted. As the texts comprising the corpus of professional

literature were the source of data for the research, “textual ethnography” was the means for analysing them.

As an ethnographer is questioning people, the reader is questioning the text. The emphasis changes from people to text, a shift that recurs in the text of this thesis. An ethnographer questions people either by asking questions to receive an answer, or observing behaviour and listening to speech with questions in mind, and deducing the answers by what they see. Similarly, the professional literature used as data was read with set questions in mind, to determine what answers were contained in the texts and, equally, what questions were not addressed at all. Over the course of the research, the texts themselves began to influence the questions, which became more sophisticated and better informed; some texts had to be re-read as a result. At the same time, the texts and the questions that need to be answered were mutually entangled. It was important that the texts were read, as it were, comprehensively, and not just with a view to finding answers to particular questions.

Bazerman (2012) describes broadly the processes that scientists go through in order to “make sense of articles and evaluate them” (pg. 385) and some articles will cease to be cited and will become irrelevant for knowledge-making, as to treat all articles, and all the information they contain, as being of equal value “goes against the grain of the very social process of knowledge making” (Bazerman 2012 pg 385).

With regard to the texts themselves, some share characteristics noted by Agar in ethnographic research. Ethnographers focus on differences, where the activities of one group are incomprehensible to another, when “something does not make sense; one’s assumption of perfect coherence is violated’. These moments of surprise are “cues as to what to study” (Agar 1986 pg. 20) These instances of difference are not dissimilar to the texts in archival and records management professional literature

which were the first to present differences between some ideas in professional theory, for example, the political neutrality of archival activity, and the ‘actuality’ of professional practice in politicized environments such as South Africa or Cambodia. This is not exactly difference of the same nature – Agar is talking about differences between cultures – but it is true here that such a difference (or ‘breakdown’) ‘signals a disjunction’ (in the case of archival theory, between theory and practice). This may be a partial explanation of why such discussions and challenges, presented through the literature, focus on or arose from situations of political instability and why the manifestation in practice of responses to these challenges (e.g., by outreach work) also focus on social groups that were already politicized: ‘Once a breakdown occurs, something must be done about it’ (Agar 1986 pg. 21). At the same time, in order to understand the context of each text, and the relationship between each text and both theory and practice, some standard questions had to be asked in each instance. To make reading the texts manageable, the researcher in a sense “interviewed” them, by having a set of questions with which the text was first approached once its relevance had been established.

In order to maintain a consistent structure in at least part of the analysis of the text – whether the book or article in question was part of the literature that was reviewed or was a source of data - a form of questionnaire was devised for the texts. Aside from the bibliographic notes to be made, the questions were formulated that were to be applied to each text (see Appendix 4), though not all of these questions were relevant to all material read. In some cases only basic information was recorded as it became clear quickly that the text was of limited value. The questions changed to some degree over time, mainly because as the research progressed, ideas and vocabulary became better informed and more sophisticated.

2.5 Summary

Chapter Two provided an overview of the research paradigm and methodology. It presented the means for identifying the sources of both literature and of data, and the means of analysis. The data was sourced from published material and this chapter outlined the process of “textual ethnography” by which the texts were systematically analysed and “questioned.” Further information or examples of points discussed in this chapter are provided in the Appendices.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

3.1: Introduction

The literature review presents the works by professional information curators published in peer-reviewed journals for an audience of fellow-professionals. The literature selected presents the reassessment of the professional through the lens of postmodernist philosophies, and some of the broad theoretical consequences of the debate.

Four main themes emerged into which the literature could be grouped, these were the deconstruction of the archives, the politicisation of information curation, counter-arguments and refinements, and the foregrounding of the records of marginalised people. While Chapter 4 introduces the data, it is in Chapters 5 and 6 that the conceptualisation of marginality and the responses hitherto given are detailed.

3.2 Presentation of Background and context

As outlined in Chapter 1, the literature used was that which contextualises the deconstruction of information curation practice, and the emergence of an argument against the political neutrality of “the archives.” As noted in Chapter 2, the research relied heavily, though not exclusively, on the core professional journals for both the literature and the data. *The American Archivist* was the first professional journal to be established, in 1936, *Journal of the Society of Archivists* and *Archives and Manuscripts* both first published in 1955, *Archivaria* in 1975, *Records Management Journal* in 1989, and *Archival Science* in 2001. In addition there are some journals from other disciplines (e.g., postcolonial studies, ethnography) that are drawn on by authors within information curation, and others (particularly the *Journal of Documentation*) where there is important overlap.

3.2.1 The deconstruction of archival theory and practice

The literature through which challenges began to be brought to the profession with regard to its claims to or assumptions of neutrality and comprehensiveness present the background to the introduction of new ideas in professional rhetoric, particularly where the catalyst for reflection and the development of new concepts was some form of philosophy, as opposed to being a response to a pragmatic (e.g., technological) demand.

Occasionally, articles within the profession read as though there was little or no reflection on the usually positivist assumptions underlying the practice of information curation. Such narratives (for example, Trace 2002) move very swiftly from Jenkinson in 1922, for example, to Cook in the late 1990s as though there was nothing in-between; one exception being Ridener (2008) who goes into some detail not just about ideas contained in the Dutch Manual and Jenkinson's *Handbook* but also about the contexts in which these ideas were developed and the works produced. But, though reflective and philosophical writings were reasonably limited in the early years of the earliest journals there were some practitioners who acknowledged the existence of gaps in the record, and who warned against complacency, even before the more sustained debate on these issues started in the late 1980s and continued into the 2000s.

For example, in a communication to the *American Archivist* in July 1973, Colman expressed concern that little or no professional attention was being given to what he considered to be a serious problem: the politicization of the profession by means of “the studied preservation of unrepresentative indicators” of contemporary culture, an important example of these indicators being government records, “in the absence of collections which take comparable account of other aspects of culture” (Colman

1973, pg. 484), the example he gives of the latter is the documents of families. Two years later, in 1975, Ham echoed Colman's concerns. Drawing also on the published views of two labour historians, Zinn and Warner, he accused American archivists' collection and appraisal decisions of leading to 'more than a biased record' and to 'incredible gaps in the documentation of even traditional concerns' (Ham 1975, pg. 6). In 1977, *Archivaria* devoted an entire issue to the question of labour records. In the same journal in 1984, Taylor wrote of the importance of archivists moving away from the 'historical shunt' and concerning themselves more actively with the creation and use of records, rather than waiting for the records to cross an archival threshold (Taylor 1984, pg. 27). These are examples of individual instances of reflection on, and questioning of, the way professionals practised their profession and they suggest that when a more sustained critique of curation theory did evolve in the 1990s and onwards, the intended audience was not entirely unprepared.

A sustained re-examination of information curation rhetoric and theory emerged in the mid-1990s. Unlike previous reflections on the same subject, as in the examples above, there were two distinct differences with this re-evaluation. One was that it led to a sustained debate, and the other was that on this occasion, philosophy (that is, postmodernist philosophy, or rather philosophies, as postmodernism encompasses a number of schools of thought) was specifically invoked and applied. As Schwartz pointed out, the first academic debates about the nature, power and impact of "the archive" and the archival aspects of "the condition of postmodernity" were not driven by, and often did not even include, archivists or records managers (Schwartz 2006 pg. 4) Brothman published one of the first analysis of the implications for information curation of postmodernist philosophies in his 1999 article "Declining Derrida: Integrity, Tensegrity, and the Preservation of Archives from Deconstruction"

(Brothman 1999), in which he regretted the professions lack of critical engagement with postmodernist ideas. In 2001, Cook published two papers, “Fashionable Nonsense or Professional Rebirth: Postmodernism and the Practice of Archives” and “Archival Science and Postmodernism: New Formulations for Old Concepts” in which he argued that, despite its critics, postmodernism could “make the archival experience richer for archivists and their clients” (Cook 2001, pg. 15). Cook had published previously on the development of archival theory, and at least some of his impetus to reflect on the matter was the result of a concern that the profession was insufficiently engaging with the challenges posed by new and continuing technological developments, a development he felt required not just adaptation but a paradigm shift, in the Kuhnian sense.

Nonetheless, literature that presented the application of postmodernist ideas to archival theory and practice and that initiated debate about the apparent consequences or implications of doing so began to be published in the late 1990s. Where previously there had been individual reflections or single examples, now a sustained argument was made regarding the apparent consequences or implications for information curation practice of a particular philosophical view of the world. This is not to suggest that there was widespread agreement on the conclusions, or even that participants identified themselves as “postmodernists” (Harris, for example, rejected the label). The philosophers whose writings are most commonly invoked by those reflecting on theory of information curation are Roland Barthes, Jean Baudrillard, Michel Foucault, Jean-Francois Lyotard and, especially, Jacques Derrida, on the basis of his book *Archive Fever: A Freudian Interpretation* (1996).

A significant trope that emerged from the literature at this time was the challenge to the stability of the archives and the record as a source for objective truth. Harris' analysis of the profession was guided by the particular situation in which he himself worked, that as an anti-apartheid governmental archivist during the end of South Africa's apartheid, and its transition into its post-apartheid, regime. An early article called for an honest re-consideration of the "real" role played by archives in society, and offered as encapsulated in the article's title "a critique of positivist formulations on archives in South Africa" (Harris 1997 pg. 132). Harris engaged with the application of post-modernism to archival practice, and particularly with Derrida and his engagement with archives, and the information profession. Harris' influential article, *The Archival Sliver: Power, Memory and Archives in South Africa* (Harris 2002) explicitly characterises archives as only partial records of any event, in opposition to the concept of the archives as "the world's central memory institutions" (Harris 2002, pg. 65). Harris also "offers a direct challenge" to the image of the archives as a way of reflecting reality, by drawing attention to three factors; firstly, whether there is a "reality" that can be reflected, secondly that the act of recording affects the process that creates it, and thirdly, that if records do offer a reflection of reality "they do so complicitly, and in a deeply fractured and shifting way" (Harris 2002, pg. 65).

Some of the literature concentrated less on the relationships between the archives and society and more on relationships within the curation process. Nesmith (2000) interpreted postmodernist theory, as applied to information curation, as heralding a new and significant intellectual role for archives in the creation of knowledge and, presumably, for archival analysis, in articulating and interpreting the exact nature of that role. Hedstrom focussed her attention on archival "interfaces," the points in

archival systems at which the information professionals “negotiate and exercise power over the constitution and representation of archives” (Hedstrom 2002 pg. 21) particularly in the context of electronic records and information technology generally; Ketelaar (2001) reflected on the processes of creating an archive (or “archivalisation”) and on the complex relationship between archives and memory. Meehan (2009) discussed not so much whether or not arrangement and description were interpretative by nature but rather analysis of the particular acts of interpretation and representation involved.

Discussions focused on answering the question “what is a record” or reviewing the characteristics of records were prompted as much by developments in technology as by more philosophical concerns. A number of articles do draw attention to the way in which changes in technology – even what are now very familiar technologies such as a telephone (Craig 2011, Johnson 2011) - always caused a response of anxiety among information curators. The analysis of every archival action for implications of power relationships and the ways in which history is constructed can begin at one of the first actions – collection. There have been few reports of analysis of the act of record creation (even in a business records environment) for these implications, apart (so far) from Ketelaar’s investigation of the decision, which precedes any archival act, to treat something as having archival value; this decision he calls *archivalization* (Ketelaar 2001). Kaplan summarizes the relationship as a circular one in relation to personal or group identity, using as a basis the “oldest extant ethnic historical society in the United States,” the American Jewish Historical Society, while Anderson analysed both the record and of evidence, as these were conceptualised by the profession, “as socio-cultural constructs arising out of a particular view of time” (Anderson 2013 pg. 349).

The professional literature reveals an extensive and on-going discussion and debate about every aspect of information curation, from the nature of the record, the role of the curator to the technicalities of management and preservation, as a result of the rapid development and application of information technology. This is not an entirely new development, in the sense that there always has been discussion about the impact of technology, especially for reproduction, on archives and records management. These analyses have tended to focus on the practical impacts, positive or negative though there have been some recent articles that reflected retrospectively on the broader impact of increased reliance on machines in 19th century civil service (Craig 2011) and the impact of the telephone, particularly on the way in which, like the “digital revolution”, it caused concerns about loss of recorded information (Johnson 2011).

A frequent subject for discussion is appraisal, given its pivotal role for “making” information, since decisions made by information curators at this point affect what information even is available to subsequent users. Cox (2007) analysis different aspects of appraisal practice to try to develop a methodology while Eastwood (1993) analyses the underlying aims of archival appraisal.

Inevitably, as the debate and reflection continued on the real role and significance of the archives and the nature of the record, the role of the information curator was reflected upon and similarly reassessed. The debate focused on the role of the record and of the archives offered a fatal challenge to the concept of an information curator succeeding – whatever their intentions – in being culturally and politically neutral. In consequence, the role or roles of the information curator were reappraised. There had already been some discussion on this matter in light of

technological and other changes in the contemporary business world. The discussions about the theories that underlie archives and records management reflect the changes in circumstance of practitioners. The more traditional role of the archivist-historian has been defended as necessary by Bolotenko (1983) whose view was partially rejected by Cox on the grounds that the relationship between archives and historiography should not preclude equally important relationships such as with records managers that ensure that the archival profession remains dynamic and relevant to modern life. Cox (1984) also argued against the traditional role of archivist as part scholar on the grounds that this aspect was hardly possible when resources available were not sufficient even for basic responsibilities and recommended valuing the management of administrative and business records as a way to keep the profession dynamic and relevant. Relevance in a modern working environment became a desirable characteristic as modes of business management and administration changed, and Cook, previously in favour of the archivist as scholar, was (with criticisms) persuaded by Bearman's arguments in favour of provenance-based retrieval as a way of ensuring that the profession remained relevant in an increasingly electronic environment (Cook 1997). In some instances, the discussion of specific work taken on can carry with it implications for the role of the information curator. For example, in giving the background to the oral history project in question, Pymer explains that the aim of the project was not only to preserve records that had been created, but also to create new records, to "both create heritage materials and prevent them being lost forever" (Pymer 2011, pg. 191). This suggested that some practitioners did feel it was appropriate that the profession be engaged in documentary activity. The discussion about theory and the role of information curators was not inspired purely by the application of

philosophical ideas – there was also discussion inspired by the challenges involved in dealing with advances in the digital world and the implication of electronic records for such fundamental issues as the question “what is a record.” The discussion was not conclusive, nor was it always without rancour (Eastwood 1993; Cook 1994). But the introduction of ideas from postmodernist philosophy raised a great many questions about the nature and role of the record, the role of the information curator and the relationship between the profession and social structures, and meant that professional discourse.

The kinds of questions being asked by other disciplines – historiography, museum studies, archaeology and anthropology – began to be asked by information curators, many of whom felt that this development was long overdue. This point is made by Kaplan (2002), who discussed the importance for archival thinking of engaging actively with a broader intellectual landscape, already occupied by anthropologists and others both in social sciences and the humanities, of reflection on “representation, objectivity and power” and to thereby expand archival thinking beyond the quite narrow confines of the kind of nineteenth-century positivism in which, she says, archival thinking was rooted.

In some instances, the discourse considered specific philosophical or ethical assumptions and definitions embedded in professional theory. MacNeill (2001) analysed the implications of postmodernism for the assumptions about trusting records. She links the desire to set standards about authenticity with “a more general modernist urge to secure stable foundations for thought and practice” that is predicated on a simple philosophical assumption that the world can be verifiably expressed in descriptive language; she links this modernist urge in turn with a desire for control, for certainty and for “the privileging of the singular and definitive over the

multiple and indeterminate” (MacNeill pg. 42). Brothman, too, draws attention to the expectation of control and of a kind of cleanliness or purity when he uses the image of leaked ink as opposed to a written word to query the values held by information curators about records (Brothman 1991 pg. 80). Postmodernism discourages belief not only in metanarratives but in binaries – authentic versus inauthentic, oral versus written, evidence as opposed to “a constituent agent in the reconstruction of a conception of the real” (MacNeill 2001, pg. 43, quoting Chandler etc. 1994). Truth becomes not something that is demonstrated or supported by documentary evidence but rather “a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation and distribution of knowledge” (MacNeill 2001, pp 43-44); with such a dismantled interpretation of truth, everyone is implicated in its creation. This echoes Ketelaar’s point, made in the context of discussing records in post-conflict situations, that “lawyers and legal scholars had found that the truth is a legal construction” (Ketelaar 2008, pg. 10).

3.2.2 The politicization of information curation

One of the influential arguments that emerged from the reflections on archival theory from the late 1990s onwards was the specifically political nature of the record and of the role of information curator. There were two ways, broadly, in which these views were presented: an analysis of the use or abuse of records in situations of political extreme and in the aftermath thereof, and analysis of the ways in which the political treatment of groups of individuals can be reflected in records by or about them.

The significant works on the political role of archives arose from cases of political extreme, or of politically transformative situations. Although the role of records in political processes (e.g., the Nuremburg trials) was not unknown, it was not until Harris’s specific analysis of the apartheid, transitional and post-apartheid situations

in South Africa that the perspective changed to one that presented the archives as having a political nature, or even power. The degree to which archives were, in a way, complicit in the administration of the apartheid regime in the sense that the destruction or retention of records in the national archives was one of the means used to implement apartheid rendered complicated professional understanding of the role of archives. The weaknesses or ambiguities revealed by looking at archives in a politicized environment were elaborated or explained (by Harris for example) in terms of postmodernism. In some cases, the texts reveal a deliberate and self-conscious intention to create an idea of what an archives should or should not do, or should contain. For example, two texts (Assmann 2002) discuss South African President Thabo Mbeki's identification of an African Renaissance; one text covers his argument that the archives should be understood to include non-documentary resources (such as rock art) as a way of reflecting pre-literate African culture, the other calling for the African Renaissance to free the continent of the psychological and cultural distortions brought about by colonialism.

South Africa also has been heavily involved in acknowledging and articulating the political role of archives, and of developing a mature relationship between the archives and its socio-political environment. A country surviving a different sort of political extreme, and one in which the existence of the archives played a very significant role, is Cambodia. Literature discussing particularly the Tuol Sleng archives discusses the records from a variety of angles – the reasons by the Khmer Rouge so extensively documented the events at Tuol Sleng, the ideological importance of the archives after the regime had ended but before any legal action had been taken, the difficulty of assessing the objective truth to be found in the records (or in the testimony of survivors), the ethical questions raised by actions

performed on some of the records (such as publication of photographs), and the practical importance of the records in establishing an international tribunal to prosecute the surviving Khmer Rouge leaders (Adami 1998). Similarly there are analyses of the role of archives in current prosecutions and in reconciliation efforts in other post-conflict countries. Adami (2007; 2009) examined the archival theory and practice in the context of international justice, using as his example the Special Tribunal for Rwanda and the now-defunct International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, while Wamukoya drew attention to Ethiopia's ability to bring into the justice system those who perpetrated war crimes during the dictatorship of Mengistu Haile Mariam, due to the availability of extensive documentation of activities (Wamukoya 1995). In relation to events in North America, Hastings (2011) and Roberts-Moore (2003) wrote on the re-use of documents, originally created in the processes of committing Japanese-Americans to internment camps, and the relocation of Japanese Canadians, during and after the Second World War, in order to challenge the legality of the internment.

In terms of these political extremes, the multi-faceted nature of the record is clearly revealed. As the Nazi regime depended on records to find, for example, those who fell afoul of Nazi ideology, as the Khmer Rouge used records of their extermination camps to record their "progress" towards purification, so the same records were a memorial to those died and whose existence as part of the German or Cambodian people was being denied, and were the means by which the guilty could be prosecuted for their actions.

Other literature pursued the role of the record and the archives beyond that of justice within a post-conflict environment, towards its value to processes of reconciliation. Ketelaar uses the example of Northern Ireland, and he draws particular attention to

the limits of the legal process when dealing with the aftermath of national or international conflict: the legal process of trial must finish, “[t]he law aspires to a degree of finality, that neither History nor Memory does” (Ketelaar 2008 pg. 11).

One of the reasons that the argument could be made that archivists had a powerful role in relation to records was the recognition of the impact of the appraisal process: “Archival appraisal...is not merely a process of value identification, but of value creation and destruction,” a situation that leads Brothman to conclude that ‘the order archivists create out of all the information they process is an order that embodies society’s values’ (Brothman 1991 pg. 81) In some instances, that embodiment will be deliberate – where an organisation wishes to have their documentation and their appraisal or destruction strategies to be in line with those of their peers, or where the apparent use-value of a record (in the basic sense of how often a record type is being used), or where decisions about retention are guided by legal requirements. In some instances, it may be unconscious and based on an understanding of what is expected in an archive, or of recent or current trends in research, or an unstated acceptance of a dominant ideology that implicitly values certain information, or people, or activities, more than others.

Some information curators will have an explicit political ideology that informs how they approach their work, how they theorize about the work that they do and what political significance they see in the material in their custody, or in the custody of similar institutions or organisations. Nonetheless if questions of inclusivity are of significance to the profession then they cannot be left to the chance of there being a sufficient number of professionals with sufficient amount of additional time on their hands to address them. There are a number of authors who touch on this aspect, one of the most influential writers in this area is Harris, beginning with his critique of

positivist archival ideas (Harris 1997); Harris is strongly influenced both by Derrida and by the relationships he sees between archives, justice and power, arising from his experience of working within the national archives of South Africa during the apartheid era.

Once, as Cook describes it, 'Harris has injected this 'power' perspective into the archives discourse' (Cook 2013) there came to be more reflection on power relationships inherent in more domestic environments.

Cook explicitly identified as postmodernism from an archival perspective "archival postmodernism as focussing on the context behind the content; on the power relationships that shape the documentary heritage; and on the document's structure, its resident and subsequent information systems, and its narrative and business-process conventions as being more important than its informational content." (Cook 2001. pg. 25) He also drew attention to the constructed nature of the documents: "no document is an innocent by-product of a personal or administrative action", and if "the writer, the computer programmer, the photographer, the cartographer" are involved in its construction, then so too arguably, is the information curator (Cook 2001 pg. 26).

Cook credited Harris with having injected the aspect of political power into archival discourse. The political role of archives outside of politically unstable situations also was articulated. In discussing the constructedness of memory, Harris acknowledged that the potential for political power in archives is most obvious in circumstances of political extreme, but also expressed the view that constructedness, and the role of archives in the performance of power are elements of archives in all circumstances (Harris 2002).

The importance of the archive in empowering citizens as well as being a mechanism for administering ruling (or even archival) power is discussed (Ketelaar 2002) and in the same year Cook and Schwartz were able to use as part of the title for an article three words “that now resonate across a range of academic disciplines and professional pursuits” – archives, records and power (Cook and Schwartz 2002). Here, the authors articulate their view that the archives is not a passive entity but “but active sites where social power is negotiated, contested, confirmed”. Schwartz investigated the location of the “space/power nexus” – “In declaring the institution a space of knowledge, must we not also acknowledge that it is a space of power?” (Schwartz 2006 pg. 1) Schein (who draws attention to the fact that he is not an archivist but a geographer) also describes the archives as being “laden with...webs of power relations” (Schein 2009 pg. 91). During the same time, a number of practitioners presented reflections on particular groups of people who had, or continued to have, marginalised positions in society. It also is the case that politicized environments are not always at an extreme; in setting the scene of events that led to his reflection on the role of archives in gay history, Danbolt’s refers to instances of political activism which do not get widely reported, demonstrations that did not involve large numbers of people, or that passed off without much confrontation and therefore were not newsworthy (Danbolt 2010). Although Danbolt’s article focusses exclusively on gay history, and on the possibility of an “archives of emotion” in order to capture the fleeting evidence of gay existence, his point regarding disregarded activism has implications that he does not follow-up. His article indicates the importance of the archives containing a great variety of traces of forms of evidence of hidden lives, though he does not follow up journalism as a source of as much created reality and history as archives. Similarly, a number of

articles reflected on evidence in the archives – through presence or absence – of racial inequalities: Bressey on questions left unanswered by the ‘sightings of Black people’ in British administrative records (Bressey 2006) and Bastian on the ‘master narrative’ of postcolonial records failing to reflect “oppressed and the voiceless ” (Bastian 2006.)

The dismantling of the narrative of the neutral archives and the apolitical curator gave rise to a thorough-going reflection on the political aspect of recorded information and those who had responsibility for it. Possibly inevitably, the first examples presented arose from unstable or extreme political situations. However, there were many examples available of political imbalance or injustice that, though they may already have been articulated, had not (yet) led to instability.

3.2.3: Counterarguments, refinements and solutions

As has been mentioned earlier (3.2.1) one of the differences between the most recent re-examination of archival theory and those examples, such as Ham’s, of an earlier date, was that the views of, for example, Cook and Harris, gave rise to more sustained debate than had been achieved previously. The questions, challenges and new analysis presented to the profession through the texts reviewed above received response. As with academic historians, so with archivists, when postmodernist ideas began to be presented as relevant to professional practice, there were those who embraced it, those who engaged with reservation, and those who reacted negatively. Initially the responses were in the form of counter-arguments or criticisms. Later, engagement was also in the form of refinements to or elaborations upon those elements of postmodernist ideas that had become reasonably mainstream in professional literature.

There had been previously been extended debate over whether or not archives has a professional theory, other than to keep information of historical value and a re-assessment of the idea that there was such a thing as archival science, not because theory was not of significance in the profession but because the notion of archival science works only from a positivist understanding of science. Indeed at least one writer on archives denied the need for or existence of archival theory – Roberts boiled it down to a requirement to “save what is historically valuable,” (Roberts 1987 pg. 70) in an article whose title (“Much Ado About Shelving”) illustrated Brothman’s observation that archivists did not engage with philosophy because they deemed it to be “unhelpful in the face of practical problems” (Brothman 1999, pg. 69) but did not go unchallenged, for example by Eastwood (1994) and Liverton (1996) who defended the importance of theory. In 1993, the Association of Canadian Archivists Conference focussed entirely on the question of archival theory (and the debate reported in *Archivaria* 37), while Harris characterised existing archival discourse as “sterile, outmoded,” which was challenged and re-shaped by “technological revolution, international engagement and exposure of the condition of post-modernity” (Harris 1997).

Once such disruptive ideas had been brought explicitly into the purview of archival practice by writers like Cook or MacNeil (MacNeil 2001) an internal debate then developed; disruption of and challenge to existing archival theories was not any more universally accepted in the profession than similar challenges were by academic historians (see, for example, the exchange of views between Brothman (1991) and Eastwood (1993) an exchange upon which Cook (1994) also commented. In some instances the counter-arguments to challenges presented by those influenced by postmodernist ideas were not delivered directly; Eastwood, in

analysing the 'crisis' over appraisal, proposes an adherence to the mind-set of 'archives are evidence first' which will enable the archivist to decide "which actions society will need to recall and which documents best recall them" (Eastwood 1996, pg. 114)

The literature reflects a wide range of strong views on the question of the role of archives as evidence or as memory. Ketelaar approaches the issue by examining the use of record in the legal cases arising from war crimes, the examples being prosecutions arising from the war in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda (Ketelaar 2008). Ketelaar makes a clear distinction between the role of the court in determining accountability, and any expectation that the court establish an official history, much less the truth of what happened. The record is evidence for that period of time but when the court case ends, the record then becomes, or can become, something else. It is not Ketelaar's view, as it is Osiel's that the court (or the record) can address issues of collective memory and trauma, but he identifies a role for the physical archives in reconciliation and commemoration (Osiel 1997).

The response from the late 1990s onwards, after which point references to postmodernism, archives-and-power, and multi-vocality became, if not common, at least not uncommon in professional journals, suggests that the intellectual ground had been changed and had become receptive to certain ideas. Some factors that encouraged these changes may have been in the wider socio-political arena, as archives responds to its contemporary environment, and this thesis takes the view that new ideas are brought into, and normalized within, professional discourse at least partly by the professional literature. Although there was (and, to my knowledge, still is not) a history of the development of professional theory under the influence of postmodernist ideas and, equally importantly, of the debate and discussion that they

provoked, a number of topics were addressed separately, in terms of their importance or status in a postmodern archives.

Once the neutrality of the fundamental functions of archives and sources of records also began to be questioned – was their primary function as evidence, as historical record, as personal, group or social memory? The nature of memory was questioned (Klein 2000) as well as the view of records as personal evidence (McKemmish 1996) and some texts reflected also on the political importance (especially in post-conflict situations) of forgetting as well as remembering. Ketelaar (2001) compared the differences in perception of the archives by its users. Archivists and historians, he says, see the archives as “repositories of historical sources” while sociologists and anthropologists see the archives as “a system for “collecting, categorizing and exploiting memories” and thereby they acknowledge, in a way avoided by archivists and historians, the archival role in shaping memories. Nesmith (2004) summarises what he sees as an historical return – having moved away from regarding historical knowledge as a central element of an archivist’s professional expertise, Nesmith sees the profession moving back towards an appreciation of the value of this expertise.

Part of the debate about the role or function of the archives focusses on whether or not the archive contains evidence or if it contains memory (Greene 2001). Jimmerson (2003) explored the nature of memory, including the constructedness of archival memory (archival memory being the collection of “surrogates that can attach memory to unchanging form.” Meehan (2006) investigates what is evidence, in archival understanding, Moss (2005) questions, in a way, why evidence (in the sense of questioning the role of records and their curators in an increasingly audited society) and Millar (2006) asks similar questions about the relationship between

memory and the archives. Also under scrutiny was the nature of the record as evidence, with articles by, Cook (1997) and Fairweather (2000) and there is reflection too on contemporary society's strong and sustained interest in memory and heritage, whether in a post-conflict situation (Ketelaar 2008) or a more general manifestation (Wareham 2001; Brothman 2001).

The direction of development of understanding the nature and role of the archives in society seems to be less towards the establishment of an agreed state and more towards the identification of all of the facts that cannot be accounted for within the archives. The archives, as a cultural resource, are objects to which meaning can be attached, successively and simultaneously, and these elements are beyond the institution's, and the profession's, control. Pursuit of clarification on these issues, and openness to influence from other professions, crystalizes the image and interpretation of the archives in the wider world. Regardless of whether information curators agree with or approve of what might be called the non-professional life of the archives, non-curators use the image and vocabulary of the archives, in the same way that people with no professional involvement with information are creating archives.

Some mechanism for resolving some of the weaknesses of information curation practice and theory may be small but significant. For example, Brothman has described the physical presentation of history in printed books as contriving "to perpetuate the appearance of seamless, and participat[ing] in the covering up of the evidence of an antecedent *story* of travels, of wanderings and meanderings through the archives" (Brothman 1993). As part of this, Brothman sees the footnote both as a point of rupture in the text, a point at which deconstruction can begin to happen; though curiously he also sees the placement of footnotes away from the text

as being part of the historians' attempt to "eliminate the tell-tale scars" of the history text having been constructed from other texts. It is, however, arguable that by making the reader turn from the narrative, interrupt their reading of the historian's conclusion in order to look at the footnote, that greater attention is thereby drawn to the construction of the text and its reliance on other texts. Indeed, the footnote invites the reader to engage critically with what they are reading, and provides the tools required to construct a text of their own. Archivists on the other hand do not, in the catalogue or description, tend to include these points or rupture or of deconstruction. Indeed, as many on-line catalogues facilitate only searching for single items, rather than series, or allowing browsing, it may initially be difficult to see where the footnotes might be placed. However, when finding aids were all in hard-copy, archivists did not include "construction" information but were expected to create a narrative, even if this did mention absences from the series. Nor has it been required for archival institutions to maintain previous catalogues and finding aids, thereby presenting with each iteration an apparently complete and unambiguous creation. Disrupting their own text may be a mechanism for archival institutions to invite engagement and deconstruction and drawing attention to the gaps in the collection provides a guide to interpreting and countermanding absences.

There are a number of articles on the value of community archives as a means of diminishing the gaps and absences in formal archives. Flinn (2007) acknowledges the complexities involved in defining a community but emphasises that the group in question should identify itself as a group, and that the impetus to document and collect the history or heritage should come from and be directed by the group.

Many of the steps taken to respond positively and effectively by information curators concerned by the political weight being given to the presence or absence of records

from the archives were engagements with the world beyond the archives. That is, professionals sought to more clearly identify relevant records already in their custody, engage with creators or users, identify sources of significant records, and so on, as indicated above.

Some, however, consider responses that focused more on the interaction between the information curator and the records. In a special issue of *Archival Science* in 2001 that concentrated on theme of “Archives, Records and Power” Cook and Schwartz’s analysis of the role of archives is influenced by Butlerian performativity (Butler 1990) and describe the practice of archives, or the operations carried out and processes through which the information curator goes, as “the ritualized implementation of theory” (Cook and Schwartz 2002 pg. 173). In the course of texts published within that themed issue, some writers focused on some of the key professional activities. Harris and Duff (2002) analyse the archival descriptive function in terms of it being a point of, or a site of, construction of meaning, and deconstructed the kinds of assumptions (e.g., of a boundary between text and context) that underlie descriptive practice. Others - for example, Ketelaar (2008) and Koltun (1999) - consider the ‘sites’ of this performance, that is, the buildings in which information curators work. Meehan (2009) examines the role of inference in archival arrangement and description, and how archivists might, professionally, account for the speculative nature of their activities. In the interrogations of specific areas of practices, like appraisal, Dodge (1997) sees an overall need to deliberate on the archives and its contents in light of the instability of both place and time that has occurred in modern (or late-modern), post-industrial society “where a diffuse, transnational economy is all-pervasive”. This echoes Duranti’s expectation of a “global record” requiring a “global conceptual underpinning” which she argues

already is in existence and depends on the universal nature of records (Duranti 1994).

The unstable nature of time and place taken as a starting point by Dodge (1997), where things (in this case, records) never exist as finished products but are continually being re-shaped and re-made. A number of writers have radically reviewed accepted theoretical concepts about archives and records, and the model for conceptualizing records, especially in a business environment, moved to one less defined by boundaries and thresholds. Hurley moved away from the traditional “life-cycle” framework for illustrating the movement of a record, especially in a business context, and replaced it instead with a continuum, itself critiqued by Cook (2000) in relation to its use for cultural or non-business records. The continuum envisions a record being used and re-used in different contexts and provides a more flexible metaphor that more accurately reflected the actual life of a record. Brothman (2006) also re-imagined the life of a record, but extends the concept of a record having a life that progresses from birth to death, and proposes a helix as a way of avoiding the limitations he sees being imposed by the language of the life metaphor.

Oral history has often, and over many years, been a choice for information curators wishing to augment a collection, or to ensure that even a familiar narrative (such as wartime) is accounted for from many different angles. The possibilities of performance have also been discussed (for example, theatre, dance and carnival). Community or grass-roots archives, where the professional curator goes outwards rather than tries to draw groups in – non-curatorial or non-institutional archives.

In noting the range of issues upon which postmodernism is seen as having an impact, Cook lists “authorship, media, representation, organizational behaviour, individual and collective memory, cultural institutions, history, and, most recently, at

archives themselves as institutions, activities, and records” and characterises these as “almost everything an archivist thinks about” He characterises postmodernism as eschewing metanarrative, seeking to challenge and dismantle hegemony (of whatever type) in favour of diversity developed by “recovering marginalized voices”, and notes the criticism that postmodernism itself is a “methodological metanarrative”. Cook’s reasons for archivists to engage critically with postmodernism are fourfold: it pervades the “spirit of the age” and therefore deserves the attention of archivists, since archives “reflect the characteristics of their time and place”, new archivists will already be educated in a postmodernist environment, postmodernism has begun to be a feature of archival discourse through the published articles of archivists assessing the impact of postmodernism on archives, and, conversely, because philosophers had begun to directly address archives as a topic.

3.2.4: Foregrounding of the records of the margins

As the rhetoric of professional theory continued to mature, and postmodernist philosophy, reflection informed by professional practice, and technological and other developments continued, the literature began to reflect specific instances where the political nature of the record and of the information curation were manifested through, or embodied by, a particular collection. A number of articles focus on records that are disregarded or whose importance may not seem immediately obvious while others detail instances of response to loss, or the danger of loss, of certain types or sources of records.

Many articles focus on individual instances, such as the records of left-wing/non-mainstream political movements in Denmark, or the destruction by natural disaster of a personal collection based on the history and culture of New Orleans. Texts also reflect the record-keeping activities at governmental or national levels, especially in

relation to unmediated records, or those that are in some way vulnerable to loss, e.g., safe-guarding of oral traditions (several on this, e.g., the Thai Ministry of Education) or detailing the activities of cultural institutions to retain or access vulnerable records, e.g., a training programme for librarians intending to work with rural Indian communities in Mexico. One such example, that of the Ferrer i Guardia Library in Alella in Catalan Spain, is presented as an agent for promoting the recovery - or the non-loss - of local history through oral sources and illustrates another cause of unintentional vulnerability – the decline in the numbers of people who can speak dialects or minority languages. Other articles cover the circumstantial difficulties faced when trying to preserve documentary evidence of marginal groups or problems arising from absent or insufficient legislation, or specific problems arising from the damage done to infrastructure, lack of educational or professional training opportunities, or basic office equipment as a result of war or natural catastrophe (e.g., in Cambodia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Senegal and Iraq). Carter advocates caution. While he encourages archivists to respond to what he describes as “unnatural silence” he warns against either taking action where individuals or groups choose to be silent, and against any temptation to fill the spaces on behalf of the silent (Carter 2006), a warning also sounded by Ketelaar in distinguishing between inclusiveness and “the danger of speaking *for* the other”. Indeed, Kurtz (2006) raises the question of whether or not projects – such as the oral history project of his example – might not serve to “re-inscribe various powers of colonialism” even while the projects are intended to “harness a de-centring of the resources that power has colonized” (pp 64 – 65). The caution sounded by Carter and Ketelaar with regard to how excluded people should be included causes, by extension, a possible ambiguity in Cook’s re-assessment of appraisal, “We are what

we keep, we keep what we are...” The content of the archives is a record in itself, in its totality; are curators “speaking for the other” by reflecting the neglected in a place that might suggest that society was not, in fact, neglectful? If society keeps what it is, and it is neglectful, marginalizing and exclusionary, then is it arguable that those characteristics ought to be reflected, by absences, in the archives? In trying to include in the official record (however communally that is created) those who are not organically included, are archivists performing an act of just redress, of historiographical foresight, well-intentioned but ultimately unjustifiable interference?

3.3 Summary

It seems from the literature that the sustained re-consideration of archival theory in light of postmodernist ideas was the framework through which ‘the archives’ was deconstructed, and complicated and disrupted the mainstream professional narrative of the ‘neutral archives.’ There is nothing that says this was inevitable – it could have been some other philosophy. Nor is it likely to be really true that this narrative was ever or always pristine. The criticisms offered by Ham and others to archival exclusion have already been mentioned, and Zanish-Belcher and Voss’ 2013 volume, for example, gives an overview of the efforts that had to be made to establish a presence for the records related to women in United States history. But once that narrative was compromised, conviction that archives were neutral or the contents were evidence of ‘just the way things were’ became a choice, not an assumption. A significant element in the discourse of this time that was not perhaps present in earlier literature was the explicit use of a particular philosophical ideology – postmodernism – to discuss issues of interest where previously the ideology was implied, assumed, ‘common sense’, the analysis of the political nature of the archives at a high theoretical level, not at the level of specific collections and the

fundamental implications of a heavily technology-dependant culture for the basic principles of practicing the curation of information, rather than recounting how particular applications were adapted or particular challenges met. In addition to this new development, the debate that arose from the initial proposals about the implications of postmodernist ideas for archival practice was sustained. Ideas that were introduced through professional literature gained responses, either of support or of rejection, and they were elaborated upon. As a result, some arguments put forward, for example, those made in relation to the partial and potentially partisan nature of the archives as a record of events, and to the inherently political nature of the record, became increasingly mainstream.

If it is true that the “other” is a creation in the way that the Orient was a creation of the Occident in Saïd’s analysis – where the dominant way or life, or culture or discourse “set itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate or even underground self” (Saïd’s 1978, pg. 88) then the element of this relationship that is lacking in the conceptualisation of *liminal* is the deliberate acts of creation. Cook summarised the *other* thus: “As a result, society has become more aware of what postmodernists called the “Other”– those beyond itself, those whose race, class, gender, or sexual orientation may be different from its own, those who in a globalized community it can no longer ignore when constructing its own identities and composing its own narratives.” (Cook 2001 pg. 23).

The relevance of postmodernism here is not in providing “the correct way” to interpret archives and records and the archival role, or in being the path to “the right answers” to the questions that have arisen in professional theory in the last two decades. It is purely that postmodernists were one of sources of disruption to the professional paradigm – they acted as prompts to instigate reflection on established

ideas, and to provoke, possibly, greater reflection - archivists should “stop being custodians of things and start being purveyors of concepts” (Cook 1994 pg. 304). The professional literature reveals this deconstruction of information curatorial practice and the politicisation of the records, as well as counter-arguments and refinements to these ideas as being significant over-arching themes. In addition, and arising out of debate and on-going discourse, the literature also presents analysis of particular instances of political imbalance, exclusion or neglect. In doing so it foregrounds the records of marginal people, or records held with little regard, in a way that not only draws attention to particular collections but contextualises them in a wider political and philosophical landscape.

Chapter 4: Introduction to the Data

4.1. Introduction

Chapter 3 referred briefly to texts that were used as data, as opposed to those that were the subject of the literature review. That chapter presented the texts that were the background and context to the research. The literature reviewed revealed a number of themes that had emerged during the professional discussions and re-appraisals of practice. By providing the background to and presentation of wider discussions about professional theory, and highlighting themes relevant to the research, the literature review helps to clarify the relevance of the texts used as data.

As outlined at the start of Chapter 3, the literature comprised material published by professional information curators for their fellow-professionals, and which gave the background to an intellectual landscape that developed from the philosophical re-appraisal of the profession through the lens or framework of postmodernism. The literature review drew attention to the way in which discussions and debates in this vein prompted new questions or influenced existing ones about the nature of records – for example, what counts as a record - their social function, and the role of those who curate them. Postmodernism was not the only catalyst or influence, as changes in technology and legislation also prompt reflection, but it influenced a wide range of discussions and in particular it introduced the idea of power into archival discourse.

For this research, one of the most important factors to emerge from the literature was that of power as a consideration, or problematic, within the archives and within discussions about records. It was within the context of this line of discussion that archives and records began to be explicitly discussed as sites of power, of inclusion and exclusion and in which a conceptualisation of marginality began to develop. In response, as indicated above individuals and individual institutions began to consider

and engage with particular instances of marginality. The data, therefore, comprises those texts that present or elaborate upon the kinds of marginal people or records engaged with, and the causes and means of that engagement.

The literature review indicates that concern about the way in which information curators might unwittingly be reinforcing injustices or social exclusion did not abruptly emerge in the late 1990s. Similarly, there is evidence of some instances of programmes of activities being embarked upon in order to preserve cultural evidence that was in danger of being lost. Early examples often were not the initiative of record-holding institutions, but of practitioners in different cultural fields. Although the term has accrued negative connotations (Momigliano 1990), antiquarians were active from early modern times, with antiquarian societies being established in, for example, Britain, Ireland and France in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Efforts were made from the 19th century to preserve folk and traditional music, either by recording what was being played (as Lomax did in the United States) or by incorporating traditional music into contemporary classical music, in the manner of Vaughan Williams and Sibelius, for example. Even by 1975, in the first publication of *Archivaria*, Dodds could refer to archivists being in “high dudgeon” because of their initial exclusion from debate on how to preserve Canadian history; Dodds lists architects, historians, writers and administrators in the plural being contributors to the conference on the subject, but refers to the single Dominion Archivist. Similarly, non-curators, whether activists in a political sense or not, continue to identify gaps that they perceive in the collection or availability of records related to particular groups (Campbell et al 2009) or institutions that represent or engage with particular groups that are marginalised or otherwise disenfranchised (Luckenbill 1998). Nonetheless, there is evidence that, whether as an isolated instance arising from responsibility for

a particular collection or as part of a wider programme of engagement, information curators have used different means for engaging with records and people that might otherwise be lost through destruction or benign neglect. The data is presented below in two chapters. The first of these, the current chapter, brings together the range of ways through which engagement was achieved. Although the means by which this engagement was achieved varied in detail and circumstance, they took, broadly speaking, one of two approaches. Either the information curator(s) examined the contents of an existing collection with a view to identifying extant records for a particular section of society, often self-identified as a group. Alternatively, information curators sought to extend the archive and the record by attributing value to types or sources of records that might more usually be disregarded. The second chapter, Chapter 5, uses the data to suggest some characteristics of the concept of marginal or marginalisation that emerged. As will be shown, the elements that build up the concept of marginal or marginalised are not always explicitly articulated, but can nonetheless be discerned, subtle as they might be.

4.2 Mechanisms for engagement with marginalised material.

4.2.1 Combing the archives

The account of the extensive projects undertaken in the United States to establish a proper resource for the history of women has already been referenced (Zanish-Belcher and Voss 2013). It is a strong example of a perhaps conceptually straightforward response to the recognition of the political significance of records. In this example, the issue of records about women's activities over the course of United States history was politicised both by activists seeking suffrage and other rights for women and by historians wishing to establish as an acceptable area of academic research the history of women's lives and experiences.

Where justice has been outraged on a grand scale, and the outrage now either is over or is being addressed, the nature of the injustice and the events or practices through which it was manifested or administered, are known. An archive can find out whether or not its collection contains relevant material because the requirements, being retrospective, are presented clearly.

Taavetti describes how it was the Labour Archives in Finland that took on responsibility for the records of LGBT people in that country (Taavetti 2015). She draws attention to the fact that this places the LGBT collection in an institution that is neither fully mainstream nor independent activist. In some instances the discoveries may be made by researchers rather than by archivists; where the minority in question has been subjected to exclusion or injustice, the accessibility of the record may reflect this exclusion or suppression. In 2009, an eighteen-year-old claim that the archives act, in a negative and obstructive way, “as the gatekeepers, if you will, of the documents of our past” (Maynard 1991) was re-visited in the light of the Canadian *Access to Information Act* (AIA). Gentile (2009 pg. 141) claimed that the exemptions of the AIA can and are used negatively to prevent or at least obstruct access and can “thus have detrimental implications for the writing of queer history” (though her view was challenged, as being based on a misunderstanding of the Act (German 2010)). More generally in relation to marginalised sexuality and sexual subcultures, Gilfoyle (1994) described research into the history of prostitution as “one of the most dynamic academic enterprises”, and credits archivists with an invaluable role through the preservation of “long-ignored and often-discarded records and manuscripts” (Gilfoyle 1994 pg. 516). Nonetheless, he too identifies difficulties in working with records on this subject. The academic will be working with material in which the prostitute is not usually the “speaker” in the available records, but rather

the subject thereof. The difficulties for the curator include people and places involved in commercial sex practicing self-censorship so that there are no records to retain, or that many records will be the result of interaction with the government (e.g., judicial records) which may then be routinely destroyed (Gilfoyle 1994 pp 523-524, 526).

In some situations, the records are not purely for the purposes of providing neutral background but may be the basis of an action against an injustice or abuse, whether by an individual or an institution. Aside from any instance where records are destroyed maliciously, with the intent of obstructing investigations or legal actions, the destruction of records (e.g., medical records) may be done as a routine and it is only when past abuses of power are brought to public attention (e.g., the syphilis trials in the United States, the performance of symphysiotomy in Ireland) that the value of the record as evidence is known. This point does not change the fact that those responsible for curating the traces of society's activities are unable to keep everything. But if contributing records to the archives of contemporary society can be extended to "the people" and if cataloguing can become participatory, then arguably, "the people" should be able to have an opinion on at least what government or publicly-funded organisations or institutions can and should retain. Caswell (2014) draws attention to the fact that those who have been documented, in the context of oppressive regimes and human rights abuse, did not choose to be documented and therefore should, in her view, have the right to take decisions about the retention or disposal of the records. However valuable this approach may be in cases where the injustice is known, or is past, it is not applicable where such abuses have not been acknowledged. That is to say, retention or disposal decisions may have already been taken and acted upon and records (legitimately and as part of routine records management) been destroyed before their value to a search for justice is known. An

alternative – though difficult and expensive to implement – would be to have a standing invitation for public engagement with decisions taken about retention of state-related records or certain classes of records (e.g., medical or legal) thereby minimising destruction of records of activities subsequently challenged. Even if such an invitation were available, it is unlikely that all citizens would take advantage of it, as they may lack, for example, the educational capacity or the interest. Bressay's article on "sightings" of black people in British archives has been mentioned above (Bressay 2006), and Johnston (2001) negatively assesses archival practice in the United Kingdom in terms of its ability to achieve "adequate representation" of racial and ethnic minorities. Where Bressay focused on drawing attention to the presence in existing of records related to black people, or mentions of black people in records, Johnston focuses instead on acquisition of records, and the importance of the profession being able "to select wisely" (Johnston 2001 pg. 216).

A number of articles draw attention to the difficulty of trying to determine whether or not there are records relevant to a particular minority group in the archives (e.g., Namhila 2014). Most often, this will be because of failure to reference the presence, that is, failure either within the record or failure at the cataloguing or description stage by the curator (e.g., Paterson 2001, discussing slave names in archival indices). Bressay goes into some detail in this regard, reflecting not only on the limits on the information available about black people in Britain (the "absence of colour in British archives") but on the lack of clarity about some terms, for example, "creole" (Bressay 2006 pp 50, 57). Berry and MacKeith (2006) present a different difficulty in their analysis of the preparation of an exhibition of records for Black History Month. Given that the archivist had access to a collection containing papers related to a Jamaican sugar plantation that was known to include records of, for example, slaves,

no problem arose with regard to availability of, or signposts to, relevant records. However, though the exhibition was prepared with the support of a local Records Office and of academics, an Equality and Diversity Officer judged the result to be “implicitly racist”. Clearly, despite the best intentions of the curatorial and academic staff to present the records in a “clear neutral historical context” (Berry and MacKeith 2006 pg. 140), the records and their context were open to an opposing and negative interpretation. Similarly, Laszlo (2006) highlights the complications of professional curators and institutions having custody of and responsibility for records that “may not have been created under circumstances that would be judged ethical today” (pg. 299). Laszlo’s discussion is focused on records created by anthropologists and ethnographers working in the 1950s and 1960s with Canada’s First Nations, and she notes that the additional factor of the location of the records – in the archives of the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia – “situates them within a politically contested ground” as First Nations groups sought greater control over representation of their culture, and over ownership of material culture (Laszlo 2006 pg. 300).

While, as Bressay (2006) points out, those seeking “sightings” of black people in British archives may need to comb the records carefully, Mifflin (2009) uses the work of the Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project to illustrate how linguistic analysis of material in archives can reveal the ways in which the repositories have preserved “[e]ndangered languages, cultural diversity and ... multifaced perspectives” (Mifflin 2009 pg. 344). As Mifflin draws attention to the ways in which the material form of the record he discusses, Banting draws out the interaction between the cataloguing archivist and the text. Banting’s is one of the few articles that address the possibility of critical engagement with archives as text provides its context by describing the

finding aids available for the collection on which the author based her reflections (Banting, 1989). Examining existing collections of records has been one means of identifying the presence of and information about marginalised, excluded or disenfranchised people at any given time in society. In some cases the approach was very direct, that of searching existing archives for representations or signs of a particular group, though even where the search was at the level of a collection (rather than, for example, a mention in a record), the task could be very onerous. Alternatively, the available evidence might be within records, or even on their physical margins.

The approach presented in this section, of drawing out the diversity that existed unacknowledged in a collection, could be augmented by seeking to diversify the records that were in the archives, and the next section presents the data available on how the profession sought to bring in, or go out towards, a wide variety of record types and record sources

4.2.2 Extending the archives

An alternative approach in trawling the archives has been to seek not so much the marginalised person as ways to extend and diversify the archives by attributing value to a wider range of record types.

In some instances the two are connected, the marginalised status of the person or group and the need to extend the record type to which value is attributed. Hagan (1978) notes only the lack of written history of Native Americans, or at least, of history written by Native Americans themselves, as he mentions too the “positively staggering” volume of official governmental records about Comanches. In addition, Hagan notes that the Native American concept of history was different to non-Indians. This was not just, in Hagan’s view, because Native American traditions were

oral rather than written, but because Indians, if interviewed about their (or their “tribe’s”) history “frequently do not react in the same manner” to questions as do non-Indians, in relation, for example, to time and the sequence of events. Perhaps unsurprisingly, possibly the most familiar mechanism for engagement with and inclusion of the non-mainstream is through oral histories.

Oral history and oral records emerged as a familiar alternative to formal and written records, established as an source to augment the formal record or to provide the “story” of a particular group (children in the war, for example). The use of oral history programmes to augment the official record grew with the development of social history as a discipline (Scheinberg 2000 pg. 205). A 1977 article claimed oral history as an essential tool for the labour historian given the dearth of traditional sources (Abella 1977, pg. 115). The debate informed by postmodernist philosophies, however, delved more deeply into the question of the oral record, questioning a more fundamental level the manifestation of power imbalances through the privileging of the written over the oral, and drawing attention to the differences in oral and written communications. The data either outlines specific oral history programmes or the fact or problematic of oral traditions already existing. Oral history and folk history collection are a long-standing supplement to textual sources, so there are numerous articles describing particular collections or collection programmes. In addition, a number of writers investigated more deeply the significance of oral records in the context of the revival of theoretical debate; Swain defended the documentary role of oral history (Swain 2003), while Alexander also recommended using a “sensitive configuration of material with oral history” in order to minimize “archival silences” (Alexander 2006).

In some cases, accounts of particular oral history programmes also identify practical or ethical problems that arise in connection with the programme. Pymer, for example, in discussing the project to interview former residents at a children's home in Birmingham, focused on the ethical and legal problems that had to be taken into consideration; how to permit access while preserving anonymity and how to comply with the United Kingdom's legislation on data protection (Pymer 2011). In terms of what the particular project implied about who was being marginalised, it was children in care homes, that is, for whom the usual social structures of family had been unavailable and who had been moved to another, special, place. In some instances, individuals were subject or believed themselves to have been subject to injustice but in this particular case, the record was not intended to be part of a legal or reconciliatory process, though some individuals may appreciated the opportunity to "tell their story" since they were denied any suitable process while in care (Pymer 2011).

The role of oral history projects as part of post-conflict reconciliation has been reflected upon in the professional literature from a number of different angles. In some instances this was part of the process of collecting evidence, and was carried out, for example, by the tribunals for conflict in the states of the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and so on. The transformation of evidence-collection into a form of post-conflict reconciliation was specifically highlighted in South Africa in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Rwanda and also in Northern Ireland.

In addition to engaging with oral histories, including initiating oral history programmes, and with community and participatory archives, professionals have offered other responses to the problematic of insufficient diversity in the archives. As initiatives will often come from politically-heightened environments, South Africa had

a number of initiatives in relation to diversifying archives and “recovering marginalized histories” (Josias 2011 pg. 97) by exploiting a wide variety of “memory traces” – documents and moving image, but also sites and visual art - in addition to oral histories and “other forms of dialogue.” Bastian identifies a number of sources, outside the “traditional archives” for records of the colonized, including murals and performance (Bastian 2009 pg. 277-278, Bastian 2013). A more recent initiative within a politically-heightened environment is the engagement between different kinds of archives – community, formal institutions and activist-archivists – and the Occupy movement (i.e., protest activities under the common term “occupy”, the specific examples discussed being Occupy Wall Street and Occupy Philadelphia) (Erde 2014).

A small amount of coverage is given in the literature to ephemera, as records traditionally thought to be of little historical value are classified; as a class it includes, for example, postcards, book-plates, recipe books - often domestic material, the evidence of the past that “you find in the wastebin” (Burant 1992).

The Ephemera Society of America defines ephemera as “...everyday documents designed for one-time or short-term use” (Rickards 2000). Altermatt and Hilton note that ephemera is notoriously difficult to define, and while dictionary sources emphasise ephemera’s ephemeral nature, information professionals focus on the purpose and format of an item (Altermatt and Hilton, 2012) while the Society of American Archivists’ (SAA) on-line glossary of archival terms defines ephemera as materials (usually printed) created “for a specific, limited purpose and generally designed to be discarded after use”. This definition also recognises that individuals may keep such ephemera “as mementoes or souvenirs because of their association with some person, event or subject”, which may be an example of the “affect” of

which Cifor (2016) encourages appraisers to take cognisance. On the other hand, articles referring to or discussing ephemera often do not offer a definition thereof; the term seems to sometimes be used non-specifically, as a more polite or technical way of saying “miscellaneous”, there is frequent use of a fascinating and unresolved “etcetera.” This impression of vagueness is reinforced by the way in which examples of ephemera sometimes overlap with non-ephemeral records. For example Sellie et al refer firstly (pg 459) to “buttons, postcards and other ephemera” in opposition to “serials, zines and pamphlets” and on the next page refer to “T-shirts, zines, posters, records and other ephemera”, thereby leaving zines in a somewhat ambiguous position. Robinson (2014), writing on East Timor, includes in the term *ephemera* “photographs, artworks, flyers and posters”, though arguably all of these examples could, in other contexts, be records of high value, in the same way that some of the examples given by the SAA could in certain contexts be evidence (e.g., tickets and receipts both could be evidence), Examples of ephemera given in a survey sent out during the initial stages of a project to encourage students at UCLA to contribute their own records to the Bruin Archives Project included “t-shirts, pins, flyers, posters etc”

There are some collections dedicated to ephemera or to particular types of ephemera, though they are often also found in the midst of larger collections of records. Burant points out that ephemera can act as a guide important in delineating and describing certain areas of popular thought and culture that may not be captured in other media and formats” (Burant 1992 pg. 191) A small but not insignificant number of texts drew attention to what can be considered marginalised records, that is, sources of information not usually highly valued by information curators. Discussions about ephemeral records (for example, post-cards in Ferguson 2005)

and their possible value are not uncommon in archival literature and Duff et al (2012) note the value of ephemera in helping to extend and enrich understanding of a collection, the ephemera, regardless of their value individually, contributing to the holistic whole of the archives (pg 83). Similarly, Cifor (2016), in discussing the importance of affect theory for archival discourse, and the potential value of affective value – the emotional and sentimental – for appraisal refers to the Lesbian Herstory Archives encouraging “ordinary” lesbians to collect and donate “the archival evidence of their everyday lives” and though she does not refer to these as ‘ephemera’ she immediately notes that there are different reactions to “such ephemeral traces”. Cifor does not specify what these traces might be, though she does refer again later to ephemera as opposed to “manuscripts, records, oral histories, personal photographs and letters [and] zines” (Cifor 2016 pg 16). What is being evidenced, as it were, is the experience of being lesbian, rather than of any engagement with activism and the difficulty therefore would be to know what records or “traces” would be meaningful, since Cifor states that “intimacy ... is central to every aspect of queer relationships” and quotes the view that intimacy will often be too ephemeral to leave records (Cifor 2016 pg 16).

In recent years, however, attention has also been drawn to potential sources of information that would not usually be defined as a record – tattoos, for example, carnivals or surnames in certain cultures. This section will provide an overview of such examples, but not with a view of proposing that archives can curate all possible sources of information. Instead, the section will highlight the possibility that re-consideration of what constitutes ‘a record’ may in turn draw attention to the creators thereof, and act as a means for identifying people whose lives may otherwise be absent from the archives.

Very marginal records, though not necessarily of marginalized people, include tattoos as “an archive for re-reading the social history of colonial Mozambique” (Gengenback 2003). There also is a possible substrate to oral history – one even more difficult to capture or exploit – which is the unofficial word, the mutterings and criticisms that are rife when sectors of the general population reflects on or has interaction with political, cultural or other ideologies but which are never formalized (or not usually; perhaps the websites which invite comment on news articles and which receive opinions from random readers are a record of such grumblings). This unofficial, unauthorised substrate possibly leaves a trace in the popularity of certain kinds of satire or comedy, or (particularly from the early modern period up to the mid-twentieth century) in popular songs. Some texts on this sort of subject include analysis of the impact on the reception and development of political ideology of rumour and gossip (Kumar 2000), and of the way in which particular folk or myth motifs were used as a way for some communities in Africa to speak about unknown or traumatizing events in the past (White 2000). Even though the oral tradition – other than the tradition within archives of supplementing archival collections with oral ‘records’ – is not being covered here, this point about the “double-voiced utterance” might be worth mentioning in relation to marginality, in the sense of the way subaltern groups used language and text to negotiate the relationship. Bastian writes in terms of alternative archives and alternative types of records (monuments, hand-crafted items, underground newspapers) and the significance for the archives of a change in user (the example being an Aboriginal people in Australia using the “white colonial records” to authenticate their claim to land (Bastian 2013, pg. 128-129). Performance is perhaps the most ephemeral event that has been drawn into discussion about the archives. In literature outside the profession, there had been

analysis of the relationship between the spoken and the written, from the ancient world (Thomas 1989; Butler 2002; Steel 2005) to medieval Europe (Clanchy 1993; Altoff, Fried and Geary 2001), some suggesting an integral relationship, even a degree of symbiosis between the oral and the written (and the performed). Performance can carry great cultural weight, both in the sense of reflecting something about the society that it portrays (as in plays or music) or as an event that embodies traditions (as in festivals or parades), but by its nature does not create a fixable trace. Clarke and Warren give an account of a discussion between an archivist and an academic on the possibility of containing a performance in an archives as a record but also on the performativity of the archives (Clarke and Warren 2009). Bastian proposes that the carnival be incorporated into the archives, but this is achieved by placing into the archives documents about or representative of the carnival.

Consideration of oral records and of folk music as sources of historical evidence gives rise to a consideration of performance as record; indeed, there has been some reflection on the interaction of orality and performance, as oral delivery is usually a performance of a sort and may expect, or respond to, or depend upon, reaction of the audience. Bastian discusses the possibilities of a performance being in itself an archive, but this discussion is problematic. Bastian states that those outside the information professions have recognized that “such embodied performances contain archival attributes” and recommends that archivists need to expand their horizons, and the boundaries of what constitutes an archives, “[i]f the archives is to be a place where all stories are found.” Some tension arises in the two examples that Bastian gives to support her assertions; not because the assertion (regarding the expansion of archival boundaries) is wrong, but because the examples destabilize the

implication that this will be a new concept, or a paradigm shift, for information professionals. Bastian quotes Taylor as questioning the traditional view of reliable repositories of cultural memory being “texts, documents, buildings, bones”. She then quotes Burton’s statement regarding the fact that scholars have been using all sorts of historical evidence, from tapestries to tattoos “for centuries” though each of Burton’s examples (possibly excepting tattoos) are all found in some kind of curated environment.

A number of articles make a case for there being value in encouraging participation between the record-holding institution and the public, especially those who are the subject of records held. Rodrigue et al (2014) discuss the importance of supporting community-based groups in the management and arrangement of their records, prior to the group’s decision to transfer the records to a formal institution and encouraging the community to actively engage with the entity that would take charge of the records. Cook recommends “postmodern appraising”, in which the archivist asks who is being excluded and why, and then “build appraisal strategies, methodologies and criteria to correct the situation” (Cook 2001 pg. 15).

An early proposal as to the value of a documentation strategy, as a response to the need to re-assess how to appraise and value records, was made. Samuels in her article, "Who Controls the Past,"(Samuels 1986) is concerned primarily with the challenges facing archivists due to the volume of records now being created. However her concern is not purely a mechanistic one about volume, Samuels recognises the significant and significantly changed role of archivists (she uses this term exclusively), noting that “once perceived as keepers, ... archivists, having accepted appraisal responsibilities, now perceive themselves as selectors” (Samuels 1986, pg. 110). Underlining the powerful position in which this responsibility places

archivists, Samuel quotes (and takes her article's title) from Orwell's *1984*. In a subsequent exploration of a hypothetical documentation strategy, Samuels suggests that such a strategy could be of value in helping the profession to cope with the problems of modern documentation, the problems being summarised as its volume and its complexity" (Alexander and Samuels 1987). More specifically, attention is drawn to the limitations of traditional collecting strategies, which are driven by the "internal concerns of a single institution" and therefore "no longer adequately respond to the challenges presented by modern records" (Alexander and Samuels 1987, pg. 519). Essentially the strategy proposed was to go through a formal process of proposing that a certain area or phenomenon was significant enough to warrant an active collection policy, and there is some discussion of the administrative means of achieving this (e.g., finding a "champion") and of the practical questions that would then arise, such as how to manage the scope and interact with specialists whose views on records would not be those of archivists. The strategy would be developed by a decision-taking process rather than an organic one, and the phenomenon to be documented (in Alexander and Samuels' example, an area in Massachusetts where science and technology research and business were concentrated) was considered in its wide social context. This is a form of outreach, where the records in question may be excluded from the archives, though not because either their creator or their subject is marginalised.

In post-apartheid South Africa, there were a number of projects initiated that supported "community-constructed history" or "construction of collective memory" (Klopfer 2001) and Josias writes on the "less-institutionalized memory projects" carried out in South Africa after the collapse of apartheid (Josias 2011). Flinn defines "community archives" as "the grassroots activities of documenting, recording and

exploring community heritage in which community participation, control and ownership of the project is essential" (Flinn 2007 pg 153). The participation of the community or group in question is important, as there are not the same imbalances of power inherent in this kind of initiative as there has been in certain manifestations of oral history or ethnographic initiatives. Similarly, participatory and community archival practices were drawn upon for a post-conflict project in Rwanda (Wallace et al 2014). The "silences" were not caused by exclusion or disregard but by the great psychological difficulty of speaking about traumatic events for people who had lived through them; in this case, silence was a coping mechanism. The project was predominantly focused on seeking psychological benefits for participants and to support the perpetuation of Rwandan culture and re-establish its transmission, disrupted by the 1994 genocide. However, those involved sought to enhance the psychological benefits by "promoting archiving as both a process and actual physical vestige" (Wallace 2014 pg. 278), in particular, through the participatory construction of an archives, and through facilitation of "trust, knowledge transfer, and fluid custody" using community archives processes (Wallace 2014 pg. 278 – 279).

Carter recommends that information curators engage extensively with marginal groups: inviting members of community groups to engage with the processes related to their records, engaging in outreach activities that will alert such groups to the presence of archives willing to provide support in relation to records, engaging in documentation strategies to establish which groups were active in a particular community, in order to ensure that their records are represented in the archives (Carter 2006, pg. 231). These activities are not predicated on the assumption that the records in question will be in the custody of the archives.

Similarly there were a number of projects established to try and diversify by means of participation. These projects include the Australian Trust and Technology project, which devised archival systems that allowed for incorporation of indigenous oral memory, to minimise the perceived division between oral and written traditions and thereby better support indigenous communities. Bastian has further recommendations regarding the possible ways of countering “the many layers in the disconnects of colonial and post-colonial history” (Bastian 2002 pg. 79). Bastian draws attention to another form of exclusion: that of access to records, in a way that perpetuates the subaltern position of the colonised people. She uses the specific example of the records of the former slave colony of the Danish West Indies (now the United States Virgin Islands), and the effect on the Caribbean population of limited access to records of the administration of the colony and of a slave revolt in 1848 (Bastian 2002).

In a way community archives are post-custodial, in the sense that it is the community and not the institutional archives that have custody. Tough (2004) outlines the opposing points of view regarding post-custodial archives, with Upward (2000) advocating it within a records management environment, meaning that current records do not cross a threshold or change location in order to become part of the archives, and the practical response to this, given by Hedstrom, for example, is to include the archival metadata requirements in any system devised to manage current (especially electronic) records. The opposing view is presented by Duranti (1999) and MacNeil (1995), the former being mostly concerned with a demonstrable chain of custody that can support authenticity, and the latter with the damage done to the evidential value of the metadata if it has been subject to “interference from

outsiders.” Tough presents a case arguing for the value of post-custodial approach for certain types of records.

Although, as mentioned above, many practitioners reflected on the often complex challenges presented to professional practice by the advent of ever-changing and ubiquitous technology, some of these changes were themselves agents of increased engagement and diversity. Ketelaar (2008) takes the view that the developments in social media and new technology generically referred to as “Web 2.0” could be used to allow archives to be, as Harris described it, “hospitable to ‘the other’” by facilitating the establishment of a community, or “aggregate” of records, that would be “generated by multiple layers of actions and interactions” between all people and institutions in the community.

This is similar to one of Bastian’s suggested responses: Bastian suggests that the traditional principle of provenance can be adapted and manipulated to be a mechanisms for bringing to the fore the many “voices” in a given archives. Although the focus of her articles is the post-colonial archive she acknowledges that there are many colonial features remaining within the microstructures of the modern world and proposes a concept of a “community of records,” that is, the community as a records creating entity, which in itself, contextualizes the record it creates (Bastian 2006).

The United States government memorialized the destruction of the World Trade Centre by building a monument on the site where the Twin Towers had been situated. In 2009 there were also two archives that collected documentation related to the attack (Caswell 2009), particularly in relation to records generated using cell-phones or social media technology. The September 11 Digital Archives in the American Social History Project at the City University of New York Graduate Center and the Center for History and New Media at George Mason University seeks not

only to maintain an archives about the events in New York on that date but to allow individuals to recount their own narrative of events. A human rights organisation, Witness, maintains The Hub which is “the world’s first participatory media site for human rights” and which collected the phone and social media-generated information.

4.3 Summary

As has been demonstrated, information curators have used a number of different approaches to try to ensure engagement with records and with people that do not necessarily have an easy route into an archival collection. The efforts at engagement start either with the existing collection, or by trying to augment or extend the collection, but within these two broad approaches the details of engagement can be innovative. At the same time, there are also difficulties reported. Holding or collecting personal information always has incurred responsibilities in relation to confidentiality, whether or not there is formal legislation to do with the protection of personal data (Pymer 2011) and there may be resource restrictions that restrict an institution’s ability to spend time or money on reviewing the catalogue or collecting and caring for new records (Chenier 2009).

All the data used contextualised the efforts at engagement in much the same way, that is, as a response to the ideas and reassessments of the kind outlined in the literature review above. There was no indication that any of the responses was being offered as a solution, but rather as an example of what might be achieved, of the intentions behind it, and of the concerns that were being addressed. Nor did any of the data contain a definition of what was meant by “marginal”; there were illustrations of the marginalised situation, explanations for it, and sometimes some broad characteristics. Nonetheless, it is possible to draw out from the data some recurring

traits or attributes in order to determine how the profession has conceptualised or interpreted “marginality.” This conceptualisation will be explored in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Characteristics of Marginality and of Professional Responses

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 outlined the ways in which the information curation profession engaged with marginalised or excluded people and records, in efforts to minimise absence and exclusion the records of contemporary society. In Chapter 5, the discussions presented in Chapter 4 will be drawn on to elucidate the characteristics – whether explicit or, more usually, implicit – of marginalisation, as that was conceptualised. This analysis is fundamental to analysing whether or not there are potential aspects of marginality in society that are as yet unaddressed.

5.2 Characteristics

Given that who or what is marginalised in society not only changes radically from culture to culture and from time to time but that marginalised groups are not monolithic or straightforward, the development of a professional framework that could engage with implicit rather than explicit marginalisation would be a complicated and subtle process that require understanding of the nature and implications of marginality in society. In the professional literature and in the data reviewed in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, there is extensive reference to ‘margins’ and to ‘marginal’ or ‘marginalized’ people. Although in each instance, the exact meaning of the word in that context was clear, and in some cases there was an outline of what kind of groups were being referred to when the term was used nowhere in the literature was there an analysis of what ‘marginalized’ meant in more abstract terms.

Marginality is not, of course, a concept originating in or exclusive to archives and information management theory. In 1928 Park published “Human Migration and the

Marginal Man” in *The American Journal of Sociology*. In it, he posits the figure of the “Marginal Man” in whose mind the “process of civilization may best be studied” (Park 1928, pg. 881). His aim in presenting this figure is to move away from existing theories on the development of human civilization, especially in relation to accounting for cultural differences. Theories at this time assumed that it was the migration that prompted cultural changes, but this engagement between different populations was interpreted as violent and involving open conflict. In light of changes in commerce and travel in the modern world, Park argues that insufficient attention had been paid by theorists to the role of the individual who has been “released” from the mores of the society which he left and may be emancipated by the society to which he has moved. He excludes from his discussion “gypsies and other pariah peoples” as they move and retain their customs and do not significantly influence cultural life, and, like hoboes and other mobile people, their relationship to societies in which they are found “is symbiotic rather than social” (Park 1928, pg. 887). Margins, at an individual level, are active positions in the sense that they arise from movement from one place to another, and some form of conflict, either at a cultural or individual level. Park’s interpretation of the origins of margins in 1928 United States is arguably a more domestic, as it is not in a situation, or a result of, war or other social catastrophe. Searching for a definition of marginality, in the context of sociology or social work, does not easily yield a result, though perhaps, as with information curation literature, a shared meaning is understood to exist but is not articulated and requires lengthier research to establish. In 1992, Weinberger revisited Park’s theory with the aim of producing “an improved structural analysis of marginality for the investigation of different empirical cases” (Weisberger 1992, pg. 426). Though he refers in passing to the fact that “most feminist and post-

structuralist investigations of marginality and social knowledge do not trace their lineage to Park's discussion" (Weisberger 1992, pg. 425), there is no reference to an alternative lineage. In Weisberger's analysis, Park's interpretation of marginality is insufficiently complex because it ignores a cross-current of ambivalences experienced by the marginal person, that of wishing both to return to and to reject their native culture but unable fully to do either, and also wishing to both assimilate into and reject the new culture, but again unable fully to do either. To trace the development of a sociological concept of marginality, though rewarding and potentially enriching the concept in the context of information curation, would require a lengthier period of research that does not appear to be justified in the context of this thesis, as there is no indication that the concepts are different in any significant way. Indeed, they share the characteristic of generally assuming the marginal position to be a negative one. Park does not say this, in his short 1928 article that introduced his idea of the "marginal man", he simply says that it is an ambivalent position. Weinberger on the other hand draws particular attention to the unequal relationship between the marginal person and the stronger or more dominant culture, and much of his article is taken up with describing "different strategies of adaptation" that the marginal person can pursue "in order to find resolution to their subordination and the contrary influences to which they are exposed" (Weinberger 1992, pg. 432). Similarly, as is discussed elsewhere, marginal or marginalisation when discussed in information curation texts is predominantly presented as a negative position, very often co-existing with some form of social, legal or economic disadvantage.

The condition of marginality sought in this research is one where binary opposition may be more difficult to see. In addition, it is a condition where the outcomes of interaction and engagement between two or more types of culture are in the context

of the discourse between the centre and the non-centre peculiar to any given situation. The difference and the opposition between homosexual and heterosexual where one is illegal and the other legal may be more accessible, and more accessible to deconstruction by “ordinary” people (meaning, here, those who do not engage in philosophical deconstruction for a living). Focusing on a dichotomy between the unique or particular as opposed to the banal or quotidian is harder to accomplish in a meaningful way, especially when it comes to specific expressions of a post-deconstructed state. In the context of this research this difficulty may be due in part to a resistance to the expectation that the state of marginality be resolved, either by diminishing the importance of the difference, by engaging in some practical action to redress the state of marginality, or to propose a reversal of values, that is, to promote for a central role that condition that is currently marginalised (e.g., if one were to propose a matriarchy rather than a patriarchy). In his short analysis of marginality, Park characterises - in sometimes somewhat sweeping language – the places where there is extensive, on-going or dramatic encounters between different cultures, for example in cities, as places where “we are in a position to investigate the processes of civilization” (Park 1928, pg. 890). The kind of margins sought in this research are more domestic but nonetheless are a means by which civilisations are embodied and changes and conflicts administered. The topic of marginality has been brought into theoretical discourse in information curation, but there has not been, within publications by and for professional archivists and records managers, an analysis of marginality.

However, in the absence of explicit definitions, it is possible to draw out of the data how marginality was being conceptualised; in Bastian’s article on the cultural archives she outlines elements that were changed in the development of “a new

archival model”: The importance of the oral heritage and indigenous tradition, the understanding of archives as expressions of power relationships, and the recognition of records themselves as non-neutral and socially mediated (Bastian 2013, pg. 123). By implication then these were the elements that were excluded, not already in place: the oral and the subaltern in particular.

5.2.1 Questions of Power

The term marginalized, or excluded, often referred to groups of people who suffered some form of injustice or unequal treatment. This treatment was most usually sanctioned, where it was not enacted, by law or by official procedures and ranged from historic limitations on freedom and political rights within a democracy to brutal punishments in a despotic regime. This meant that the focus of attention was upon marginality that was clearly identified and injustice that was recognized to have been perpetrated. The solutions, or proposals for engagement with marginalised groups, therefore, reflected this fact. Cook loosely and in passing grouped the “issues” focused on by postmodernist theorists – race, class, gender and post-colonialism – with “other marginalized groups (aboriginal people, gays and lesbians [sic], subalterns, etc.)” (Cook 2001, pg. 16). This is one of the most dominant characteristics of marginality that of being already identified and often already politicised, before there is a response from or engagement with information curation.

This state of active or explicit politicisation is not, of course, always the case. Bastian characterises the margins as “the unremembered, the forgotten and the folk” (presumably rather than the lionized, the canonical and the high-brow), as well as small communities (Bastian 2013, 127). Similarly, in some instances margins are broadly characterised explicitly. For example, Rodrigue et al explain social history as being focused on the “common everyday struggles and experiences of ...ordinary

people,” these being set against the “privileged and powerful” who have “extraordinary accomplishments”. The result is a focus on ethnic, gender, family, rural and immigrant history; the “ordinary people” are then joined by “and marginalized groups” (Rodrigue et al 2014, pg. 96). This suggests both the marginal and the liminal: those who are actively marginalised, and those who are simply not important enough. Bastian states that “it is the minor narratives, the untold stories, the traces, the whispers, and the expression of marginalized identities that people yearn to find in the archives,” and she proposes that events such as a carnival “is such a living cultural archive” (Bastian 2009, pg. 114)

5.2.2 Margins manifested in power relations rather than absence

In some cases, the marginalization was easily identified, in the sense that there was an absence from the archives. In others, the focus was more on difficult power relationships. Hopkins identified, in 2008, an “ambiguity” between formal and informal archives when considering records of diaspora, particularly focusing on ways in which these informal groups might resist engagement (Hopkins 2008) and Peterson discussed situations of “contested archives, where an archives created by a political structure (such as the Russian Empire) but retained by only one successor, when the structure may have divided into several successor countries (Peterson 2004). Similarly, Iacovino outlined the idea of a “participant relationship model” to help minimize or neutralize the imbalance within the record between the creator and holder of the record, the Australian government, and the subject of the record, in situations where there are records about, but not of, a particular group - the Australian Indigenous population in Iacovino’s case (Iacovino 2010), which echoes Hagan (1978) and also described the importance of material records for the survival and transfer of Indigenous Australian culture (Iacovino 2012). Johnson

echoed Howard Zinn's criticism of the "bias in documentary culture" and levels a similar criticism against archives in the United Kingdom, due to a lack of engagement with, with a view to collecting from, "local Black organisations or people" (Johnston 2001)

5.2.3. Location of the debate

Importantly, the idea of marginality, or exclusion or absence, is not often discussed or described in the context of business records, but rather in the context of government or cultural institutions. This is not surprising in the context of a concept of marginalisation that is predominantly that of a political status, thus records first identified as relevant may come to light in the course of a legal or other formal process (Harris 2002, Iacovino 2010, Caswell 2012 and others). Yet many organizations have problems managing not only their records but also their knowledge, or business intelligence, or tacit knowledge, or whichever term it is that they use to mean information that is not recorded and shareable. Marginalization both of people and of records occurs in information management environments other than governmental or historical collections. The fact that none of the sources of data discussed marginality in the context of business records suggests that it is seen as a cultural matter – that is, predominantly associated with "culture institutions" – rather than discernible in every aspect of life.

5.2.4 Dynamic nature of marginality

Records used specifically to redress cases of injustice illustrate particularly well a characteristic of marginality: its shifting nature. The status of any group of people can change as a result of changes in political and economic environment. Sometimes these changes of status are very swift and dramatic, as when regimes are overthrown or leaders deposed, or in the case of a sudden economic decline, and

sometimes they are slow and incremental, as when certain philosophies (for example, vegetarianism), once considered a strange extreme, become mainstream. At particular points in the past, it was considered acceptable (or at least it was legal) to require individuals to wear badges in Nazi Germany or to deprive citizens of their citizenship, property and home in Canada and the United States during and after conflict with Japan or to disenfranchise the black South African population during the apartheid era. The time of transition theoretically could be a time in which valuable traces of the transition are generated. Those who apparently belong to the mainstream of society can be marginalized and to remember that the margins are fluid – in attempting to ensure a hearing for voices currently on the margins, the centre may change and the mainstream be pushed into liminality. Upon it being pointed out that certain books in the archival “canon” were written by old white men, and therefore irrelevant, Harris pointed out that his was also the voice of an old white man, “thought by many to be irrelevant” (Harris 2004, pg. 211) Similarly, members of a privileged group who support the loss of their group’s privilege in order to extend privilege to another (e.g., white anti-apartheid activists, male feminists) will not be within the mainstream of their ‘community’ and may be marginalized. Cook and Schwartz, in discussing archives, power and memory, make the point that engagement with the margins is not a liberal agenda or “an exercise in political correctness”, because the marginalised, in some situations, may be those who are in a dominant social position in other or many other situations; they give binary examples of “rightwing business corporations more than left-wing trade unions, developers more than environmentalists, the centre more than the regions, men more than women, racists more than reformers” (Cook and Schwartz 2002, pg. 17). A privileged position is a socially evolved and evolving circumstance and not a

biological state of being. Sometimes the status of marginal may disappear more organically. Rodrigues et al noted one of the reasons that some of the community-based organisations for Portuguese South Africans were facing closure, which was that the “due to integration of the Portuguese younger generation into the broader South African society” (Rodrigues et al 2014, pg. 99).

An analysis such as Rodrigues’ deals with the result of a project focused on determining the best way for an under-represented group (the Portuguese community in South Africa) to increase their presence in the official archives (Rodrigues et al, 2014). What is not clear from their contextualising section is why the Portuguese were thus under-represented. There are general comments to the effect that historians did not show any research interest in recent migrations of Portuguese from the 1950s and that “institutions of preservation” had focused their attention on “more dominant communities that represent power and government” (Rodrigues et al 2014, pg. 94). There is no suggestion that this absence from the official archives reflects any social exclusion or political disenfranchisement.

Although there was discussion of records that were not highly regarded or could be considered marginal, the focus was on marginality as it affected people and their social relations and interactions. This characteristic was present particularly in those data outlining initiatives to develop a relationship with the people who are the creator or subjects, or by focusing on the activities of the information curators as they interacted with the records in their care. In Cook’s article proposing four paradigms, he may be a little previous in stating that the archivist ‘has been transformed, accordingly, from passive curator to active appraiser to societal mediator to community facilitator’. Arguably, this transition is (and may always be) incomplete, If these roles are left to individual professionals or institutions to select, not all will

choose the same one, and if the roles are the result of user requirements, the professional may be playing several in the same institution. It may be more accurate, therefore, to accord both states – active and passive – and all roles – curator, appraiser, mediator, facilitator – to information curators concurrently.

5.2.5 Marginality as a layered concept

An article in *Archives and Manuscripts* (Collins 2012) noted a difficulty in identifying or obtaining records related to early women architects. The question of the unequal position of women in society – and by extension, the question of gender in general – has been politicized for over a century and the constructedness of femininity or of being female has been articulated since the nineteenth century and an area of study for many decades. During the 20th century, efforts were made to identify or collect records belonging to or related to women, with considerable success. Early efforts were subsequently criticized for not reflecting women who were not white, middle-class and heterosexual – this was a criticism of Gilbert and Gubar's, *The Madwoman in the Attic* (Gilbert and Gubar 2000) In the second edition, the authors identified among the criticisms of their literary analysis of George Eliot, the Bronte sisters and other women writers accusations of racism, heterosexism and middle-class privilege. Similar criticisms were made of standpoint theory when it was first developed by Smith being fundamentally three: arguments “against the notion of a unitary subject’ and against white, heterosexual, middleclass feminists’ appropriation of women’s experience, arguments that refute a perceived essentialist belief in the authority of women’s voices,” and questions about the “status of experiential accounts produced by people whose knowledge is discursively organized.’ Subsequently the discourse on the subject has become more inclusive. Although there are still social and political imbalances on the basis of gender, for example,

gendered differentials in terms of earnings and proportion of women in positions of political power, gender does not feature strongly in the literature on marginalization.

Few, if any, of the texts dealing with marginalization expanded on ways in which the group or topic being discussed was not monolithic. This may be due to the restrictions of space, and the fact that the focus of concern is on the record, not the structures of a particular social group. Literature from outside the profession suggests that marginalised groups can themselves contain subaltern groups; that is to say, some individuals, members of a disadvantaged 'category' of people, can be disadvantaged within that same group, as a result of some additional characteristic. An example (drawn not from archival literature but well known within feminist post-colonial studies) is that of the 'double colonisation' of women of subaltern, patriarchal cultures: marginalised by being of the colonized country, and colonized within their own culture by being female. There are reported contemporary instances of situations where women continue to be denied full participation in political and social life. In some instances this will be extreme enough to be actively highlighted (such as girls wishing to continue education being forced to leave due to attitudes to gender, highlighted by UNESCO) but in some instances it will potentially remain an absence because the lived experience of many women will reflect what Butler called "social magic" – the "everyday rituals" that make ideology and cultural norms appear normal and obvious (Butler 1996). The concerns of gay women and men may be assumed to overlap but Chenier suggests that this did not mean that there was no misogyny being expressed in gay-only places (Chenier 2009, pg. 250). Carter, for example, in discussing the possible positive use of silence, refers to silence being "important as part of the politics of women's lives," as though women were a monolithic group, and

without reference to women past and present for whom vociferousness and visibility are a more important political tool than silence and withholding.

The matter of who is or is not within a particular group also has resonance in North America, for Native American/First Nations people, as in some cases tribes are not recognized unless they are registered. It is also relevant to Australia, there may be ambiguity about whether or not individuals were Aboriginal (Nakata 2012). With regard to South Africa, Klopfer comments that “it remains to be seen whether one chief national storyteller (i.e., the records in mainstream or formal archives) will simply be replaced by another, as oral tradition in South Africa was “hegemonic and chief-centred” (Klopfer 2001, pg. 105). In relation to early interactions between white European settlers and the colonised Native Americans, Mifflin mentions in passing a complication on the boundary between the two cultures. Native Americans who converted to Christianity were, at times of conflict, regarded with suspicion by both sides. Puritans believed that only those who could directly read the Bible could be saved and therefore some Native American converts also became literate. Though this skill could sometimes be put to personal or even subversive use (Mifflin 2009, pp 360 – 361), those who were literate were thought by their tribes of origin to be intermediaries but “no longer able to speak authentically for their people” (Mifflin 2009, pg. 358).

There is at least one instance of a socially-constructed minority group: children born in Norway to Norwegian mothers but whose fathers were soldiers from the occupying German army were subsequently identified as “war children”. They suffered discrimination and threatened with deportation to Germany along with their mothers who had been deprived of their citizenship. However, a war child was only a war child if the father’s nationality was known, either because the relationship between

the parents was known or through the registration process if a child was put into a children's home or orphanage. A child could have a German soldier father but was not a "war child" and not treated differently, unless the paternity details were known (Valderhaug 2011). Suzuki (2004) discusses in detail the way in which, though "tribe" is frequently used by anthropologists, it is inappropriate because tribes are, in his view always a designation of "the other" and always, therefore, created as a result of an imbalance of power. In this same article, and to re-enforce his point, Suzuki draws attention to the ways in which the two Indian "tribes" assigned a pejorative name to those they considered other to themselves. As the white American authority tribalised the First Nations people during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, it was Cree and Abenaki people who "tribalised" as Eskimo ("eater of raw meat") those whose cultural habits they rejected but whose self-designation, Inuit, merely meant "human being". Similarly, the development of distinct "tribes" within some African countries was less an organic cultural evolution and more the result of specific actions of, and interactions between, colonial institutions; Wallace et al (2014, pp 280 - 281) describe this as a form of "social engineering" in the case of the divisions between the minority Tutsis and majority Hutus in Rwanda under Belgian rule. The case of women in colonized countries is summed up by Spivak (1985) as being "caught...between patriarchy and imperialism". It is possible to identify some absences even within the primary texts that discuss and attempt to redress the problem of exclusion. Flinn (2007) also draws attention to the ambiguity inherent in identity groups (i.e., groups established as a result of some sense of commonality between people of the same race, class, gender and so on), and he questions "...the degree to which those who self-reflectively represent a given group actually can represent the totality of that group or whether, within the group, similar

imbalances of power, or similar exclusions are being practiced". In this way, the identification of marginalised groups, despite its benefits, can manifest several of the disadvantages of pluralism that have been identified by Heald (Caswell 2013) – in this instance, the collapsing of difference and silencing of dissent, not between the margins and the mainstream, but within the instance of marginality itself.

5.2.6. Margins sometimes sought

As Flinn points out, some community groups will wish remain marginal from any formal archives (Flinn et al 2009) as will groups whose activities may be either illegal (e.g., the activities of certain animal-rights groups) or considered subversive (e.g., activists on particular matters, groups considered to be on the extreme right- or left-wing politically). In some cases individuals may elect to be marginalised and by doing so, their records, though valuable, may fall outside the remit of an archives with a specific collection mandate – for example, the writer Sholem Shtern who, having moved to Canada, wished to retain aspects of immigrant culture and to “promote a certain ideal of social justice” by writing and publishing in Yiddish, however, Library and Archives Canada is expected to focus on literature published in one of the two official languages. Equally, there are aspects of culture that may defy all attempts to document them in any way, as Alexander (2006) argued in relation to the artistic community at “Yaddo” in New York. Yaddo was the home of the writer Katrina Trask and her husband, whose estate funded the establishment of a residency programme for artists in any field, the first of whom took up their residency at Yaddo in 1926 (cf McGee 2008). The archives of Yaddo – whose residents included many very influential international figures in the arts, including Langston Hughes, Katherine Anne Porter and Aaron Copeland – were only made available in 2002 but Alexander found that the “material limitations of the artefacts and papers”

served less to reveal information than to “identify a variety of historical silences” (Alexander 2006, pp 2-3). Schwartz and Cook and Harris (2001) draw attention to care being needed when engaging with margins because “some do not wish to be ‘rescued’ by the mainstream and some will feel their naming by archivists as ‘marginalized’ only further marginalizes them” (Schwartz and Cook 2002, pg. 17)

In fact, the conceptualisation of marginality as it emerged through the data was arguably comprehensive, though there are certain emphases. The dominant characteristic is that of power: although some of the data discussed pluralism, the majority of the discourse was in terms of power imbalances either directly causing or being an important element of marginality. There is little discussion of marginality in a business context; the majority of authors approached the issue from the point of view of the people who were on the weak side of the power imbalance and how they were or were not present in records of government or in the wider cultural field. There is a tendency to treat marginalised groups of people as monolithic; this was not an exclusive tendency and may have been exacerbated by the reflective and theoretical approach which, in introducing new and “big” ideas more easily deals with a high-level concept than with a more granular analysis. Similarly there was little (but not no) reflection of people who wish to be marginalised; marginality, generally speaking, was something that needed to be corrected or resolved.

5.2.7. The Unattractive Margin

Many of the articles discuss the margins in relation to specific injustices, either current (e.g., racism) or historical (colonial relations, war). As a result, once it has been accepted that the record (and by implication then its curator as well as its location) is political, the specific political discourse demonstrated through the descriptions of engagement with marginalisation appears to be predominantly left-

leaning, secular and socially liberal. No country will be without resistance to and rejection of its dominant discourse, though expressions thereof are more likely to be marginalised, regardless of whether it is expressed in political activity. Tyacke, in referring to the use of “archives” in the context of the internet, where the term is more loosely used, mentions the probable existence of “some decidedly unsavoury digital archives.” Though she refers to these only in passing, it is for this research an interesting phrase because “decidedly unsavoury” is very evocative but being entirely undefined, is open to interpretation and therefore polysemic. What is unsavoury to one person is unobjectionable to another; indeed, another person may, for political reasons, actively support it. What is unacceptable in society may have once been acceptable – or at least, not so vilified – in that same society at a different time, or will become acceptable in the future, for good or for ill. More to the point, who should be responsible for the records of the unsavoury, whatever that might be? And which archives is at liberty to hold them? Barriault (2009) argued for the archival importance of gay male pornography, there has been academic research done on Victorian attitudes to child sexuality (Kincaid 1992) but could a contemporary archives argue for the value of retaining modern pornography, especially where the content is illegal or controversial?

Concerns about what is not being included by activities/collections/archives that are actively engaged in diversifying or “reclaiming” histories is not new. Klopfer notes concerns expressed about “who are “we”” in post-apartheid South Africa and Josias quotes Soylinka on memory as a burden, arising from instances such as the Smithsonian Museum’s decision to dismantle the Enola Gay exhibition or the “uncomfortable realities... in regard to the role of Islam and African complicity in the slave trade” (Josias 2011, pg. 99). But the “decidedly unsavoury” is present in

contemporary society, as probably it has been present in all societies, like Yeat's "foul rag-and-bone shop of the heart" (1939 pg 29), and excluding it from "the record" leaves the record unfinished.

5.2.8 Large-scale margins

In much of the literature in this area the issues of marginalisation are often associated with social injustice, and the concomitant identification of the role of records and institutional archives in enacting or supporting unjust systems. Without denying this point, and without trying to reclaim a politically neutral status for the profession and its practitioners, the archives nonetheless does not create the power structures within which it works. The importance of this point is that professional proposals for the resolution of its role in an unjust society, for counteracting the absences and imbalances of record collections, must recognize that this is not always within the power of an individual archives, or even of the profession as a whole.

Political marginalization may be due to economic factors rather than instability – for example, there are accounts of records that are in danger because the country is too poor to afford conservation or which examine the impact of the illiteracy of minority groups on the availability of records created in minority languages and held in national archives. In such situations, the causes and manifestations of exclusion or marginalisation are at national and often international political levels. The challenge that this potentially poses for the information curation profession (as will be discussed in Chapter 8) is that to raise these issues, to politicize the records in this way, and to be active in seeking resolution, may change the relationship between the profession (and possibly its constituent institutions and professionals) and the ruling political framework.

5.3 Summary

The data used did not present an analysis of “marginalisation”, nor a proposed definition. In some cases there were broad indications of some of the characteristics of marginality that were appropriate to the example used. Though such characterisations were helpful in building up an understanding of what was thought to be in need of response, they did not create a standard reference point to which other writers or practitioners referred. Nonetheless a concept emerged from the cumulative presentation and analysis of, and comment upon, particular instances of marginalisation. The predominant characteristic of the concept was that marginalisation was political. That is to say, the margins were in comparison to mainstream socio-political frameworks, and those on the margins were politicised. This latter factor gave rise to another characteristic, that of a connection with some form of social injustice or process to redress an injustice. Some ambiguities were recognised as such, for example, the possibility that marginalised or even oppressed groups were themselves practicing marginalisation, while some characteristics were implied rather than stated, such as the fact that marginalisation was mainly seen in the context of archival collections and as visible in cultural rather than business contexts. The desire for some groups to remain on the margins was expressly recognised, but there were no specific examples of activities aimed at engagement with what was described here as “the unattractive margin”. Given that the background to the development of the determination to engage with the margins was informed at least in part by Harris’ exhortation to be hospitable to the other, the kinds of marginalised groups engaged with reflect a liberal and sometimes left-leaning ideology. At the same time, as Cook and Schwartz point out, engagement with the margins should not be limited to those of a politically or socially liberal mind-set.

Despite no particular definition of marginality being discussed or determined, a fairly clear conceptualisation of the issue emerges that will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6: Interpretation and conceptualisation

Harris' application of postmodern ideas to the practice of recordkeeping explicitly challenged assumptions about the neutrality of the archives. Because apartheid, the political structure in South Africa at the time, was being openly challenged, the situation in which the archivists in the National Archives were working was politicised. Harris (1997) spelled out the way in which the archives and the people working in them were, intentionally or otherwise, facilitating the administration of apartheid and were politically compromised, not politically neutral. The potential – even usual – political nature of social marginalisation is reflected in many articles where attention is focussed on a particular example of exclusion; examples include black and ethnic minorities (Johnston 2001; Daniel 2013) or indeed subjugated majority in the case of apartheid South Africa (Dominy 2013; Flinn et al, 2009). Although there were other situations in which engagement with the margins of society happened in circumstances of open tension or conflict, the settings for most such engagements were less politically heightened. Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 have presented the data on the main responses to date within the profession to questions of bias in or exclusion from a society's archives, and from this data identified some characteristics of marginality that appeared to be implied, if not explicitly stated. Similarly, Chapter 6 will analyse the responses of the profession to the challenge of engaging with marginalisation and encouraging diversity in the archives and, from the data on this topic, draw out characteristics of those responses.

6.1 Characteristics of the responses

6.1.1 The retrospective nature of curatorial activity

A recurring feature of the profession's responses is that information curation is often retrospective in its response to contemporary social challenges. In most instances, information curation has responded to the records of a particular group, or 'the archives' draws attention to the known records of a particular group, after explicit politicisation of the group for whatever reason.

Alternatively, the response within the profession to identify or draw attention to records already in a collection may arise from interaction with users such as academic and other researchers. Although the catalyst in this case is not necessarily personally engaged with the question of marginal status, the professional response is still retrospective. There are instances where these two prompts overlap, for example while Mason (2013) explicitly relates the politicization of women during the 1960s and 1970s to the increased interest in 'women's history' and the sources thereof.

Finally, the catalyst for drawing out or foregrounding particular records may be legislation. Castan and Debeljak (2012) on recordkeeping and the rights of indigenous people focus specifically on the implications of the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act* in the state of Victoria, Australia, in 2006. That is to say, actions taken with records to address political imbalances are done after particular people or particular issues have become politicised.

6.1.2 Dynamic nature of responses

At the same time, the main options developed for responding to marginalisation and the biased or incomplete archives have been active. These options have focused on generating or encouraging the generation of alternative records, particularly through

oral history or folklore programmes, retrospective cataloguing collections with a view to making accessible relevant but previously unavailable records, or engaging with groups who have taken into their own hands responsibility for records (or other archival artefacts) to which the group ascribes value or relevance.

The responses, summarised above, to the challenges of diversifying a traditionally monovocal archives, or at least an archives that recounted the dominant narrative or discourse, have been mainly active. That is, the responses have involved archivists taking a particular and concrete action, either to generate another source of historical information (by engaging in a history programme, whether oral or written, thereby creating records that otherwise would not have existed), by being very open to recognising the value of records of different traditions (oral traditions) and a wide variety of record types (non-written, art-based), or by facilitating the creation of archives by an interested group who feel an alliance with each other on the basis of some shared characteristic, based for example on class, race, gender and so on. These activities are not divorced from theory or reflection. Each type of initiative raised questions about the definition of records, about the role and function of professional curators, about power balances and about what constitutes 'archives.'

In some, maybe many, instances, this characteristic of retrospection might be unavoidable; philosophically, if records are part or evidence of the past, and pragmatically, if information curators have barely enough resources to deal with what is already present and known and not sufficient to seek out the pending. At the same time it might be undesirable, and evidence that information curators have not yet taken up the challenge to stop rowing and start steering (Cook 1994a). It may be that re-evaluation of low-profile records, record sources and instances of counter-narrative will help to increase the diversity of what is being retained as a trace of

contemporary culture. In Brothman's view "the order archivists create out of all the information they process is an order that embodies society's values" (Brothman 1991, pg. 81); archivists therefore need to create a more complex order.

Valuable though these activities are, they are not options available to all information curators who may not have the resources, either in terms of money or professional staff, and they may not have the support of their organisation or institution, unless there is an obvious connection with a particular marginalised group. This connection may be particularly difficult to establish for information curators based in institutions or organisations that do not have a cultural or historic focus (that is, the management thereof may not be persuaded by arguments in favour of engaging with records outside of their own mandate).

Secondly, all of these options are at the discretion of the information curator, and depends on the curator being aware of and having an interest in marginalisation in general, or in a particular group. However, from the standpoint that the information curation professions should take responsibility for addressing a biased archives or, to put it another way, an archives that fails or only partially succeeds in representing the society that created it, some option should be available for all curators. The conclusion from this standpoint then begs two questions: what additional options might there be for responding to this requirement, and is it possible actively to identify – or to create opportunities to recognise – disregarded records that might have value as a hospitality to the "other" in advance of their status being determined outside the archives?

6.2 Re-conceptualising 'Marginal'

As outlined in Chapter 5, a concept of what "marginal" mean arose through how professionals wrote about their engagement with some instance or example thereof.

This concept was predominantly explicitly political to some degree, centred on cultural and social rather than business or industrial life, was dynamic and mutable in terms of its constituents, and was not monolithic, though it might be represented as such. Although this prototype, as it were, of the marginal in the context of information curation was wide-ranging, it arguably had limitations in terms of how the margins might be identified, or experienced, and how, in consequence, they might be available to engagement with information curators, and by what means. The next section of Chapter 6 proposes a re-conceptualisation of marginality, one that extends and enriches the existing concept, it does this by proposing that the aspect of liminality be introduced.

This thesis uses the term 'liminal' to refer to records that are not usually recognised as having much long-term value. In archival discourse, the term 'ephemeral' is already current. However, 'liminal' is more accurate, as it does not reinforce the low assessment of the record's value. 'Liminal' is predominantly used to mean a sensory threshold, beyond which a stimulus is too faint to be experienced, or to mean something that is barely perceptible. It is used more metaphorically here, as a characteristic of records that are easily disregarded, whose signifiers of value are too faint to stimulate a response or interest. In a metaphorical use, the word arguably retains the possibility that the threshold could change, and the value of the record, or the strength of the response or interest it provokes, could increase. Describing a record as 'liminal' rather than ephemeral draws attention to the fact that its lack of value is potentially a result of the perspective from which it is assessed and not an inherent characteristic of the record.

The value of liminal as a concept in information curation is that it attaches the record to a different concept of 'function' – function ceases to be purely a business function,

or solely the functions of an individual in their private capacity. Neither does it exactly describe a type of record. Instead, it requires the curator to look for signs of how individuals relate to or engage with contemporary ideology. The liminality may refer to the record or the creator, that have been consistently disregarded; it may refer to the activities that give rise to the record, the activities having been disregarded as being too commonplace or banal to yield interesting records; it may, though, refer to the conceptual approach of the curator, seeking evidence of engagement with, enactment of or resistance to, contemporary political and cultural ideology. Describing a record as liminal rather than ephemeral and looking for signs in the record of how the creator engaged with their contemporary society arguably increases the active, rather than passive, role for information curators in attempting to minimise archival marginalisation. To extrapolate from that possibility another possibility, that archives could by this means address or redress social and political marginalisation or injustice may be a claim too far. The records retained across a social and political environment reflect the values and structures of that society and if certain people, lifestyles, values and so on are disregarded then this fact will inevitably be reflected also. If, however, the archives has a role in perpetrating these values and operationalising these structures as Verne Harris and others have argued, then drawing attention to this role and continuing to increase the sophistication with which it is carried out may reduce its negative – and enrich the positive – impact.

6.2.1 Foregrounding the liminal

Drawing attention to the liminal, the quotidian and even the (apparently) banal can help, arguably, to provide evidence for the evolution of initiatives, for how the “potential for societal change embedded in a cultural form” is diffused (Strong, 2011

pg. 398) or strengthened. Another example of liminal are those things which are not valued because they are seen as negative: refused or unrealised works of art, for example (Zanella et al 2015); out-takes; material contextualised by someone as rubbish or worthless; the memoirs or accounts, not of people who either explored and found (such as Edmund Hillary or Lord Caernarvon, feted respectively for conquering Mount Everest and discovering the tomb of Tutankhamen) or even explored and monumentally failed (like John Franklin, whose voyage to discover the North-West Passage ended in the death of the entire expedition), but those who simply got lost and came home. As with anti-heroes, so with anti-archives.

Chapter One proposed *liminality* as a way of foregrounding low-value records, or records of low-value people or activities, that might be contextualised in a way that creates an opportunity to foreground these records, even temporarily. The value of doing so would be that, by finding a way to place routinely disregarded records outside of their normal or usual context, an opportunity would be created thereby of appraising records or record types afresh. Such opportunities would not necessarily lead to a decision to retain records in recognition of long-term value hitherto unobserved, but in some cases it might and in any case it would encourage a routine of professional reconsideration of existing decisions and judgements. The relationship between liminal records, as defined in Chapter one, and the “other” to which this thesis proposes curators should be required to provide hospitality, is that it is through the quotidian, even the banal, aspects of life that contemporary ideologies can be implemented and experienced, especially in apparently stable political regimes. Ideology is out of the control of the information curator: it is the socio-political ideology that informs the contemporary society in which the curator is living and working. It is not a declared theoretical framework, and its manifestations are

often so subtle, and so open to interpretation, as to be invisible unless actively foregrounded by analysis. At the same time, if “liminality” as a concept is tied exclusively to records, that is, if the purpose of proposing that liminality is an important concept is solely to identify actual record types, it perhaps loses some of its usefulness. Liminality can be demonstrated contextually, it can be demonstrated by looking at the describing documents. It can also be sought within existing records. In a way, the liminal is, or can be understood as, an element of, or a characteristic of, “the other”. So liminality becomes something that is sought in the context as well as in the text. In a way, liminal is used here to try to include in marginality the concept of “other” without the power imbalance, “marginality...conceived of as epistemic category rather than power status” (Bradatan and Craiutu 2012). Searching for liminality within records is not to give weight of value where it cannot be justified, but to multiply the criteria by which a record’s value will be judged. What is being sought is not necessarily a new source of information or new records, or an approach of such inclusivity that all records are kept. Rather what is sought is a means to defamiliarise the familiar, without prejudice as to the outcome, at the point of decision, whether this means considering valuing a normally disregarded record or it means reassessing negatively the value of a normally “canonical” record. (It may not be possible to act on the decision taken without prejudice: most organisations are hierarchical, for example, and if a very senior individual attributes importance to, say, the purchase of a high-profile manuscript, then several factors may have to be considered).

The value of the liminal as opposed to the marginalised seems to lie in its potential as a mechanism to allow information curators to engage with the marginal before its status of marginality has been generally recognized. Many of the articles in the

professional literature that discuss archives and justice refer to those situations where justice has been outraged and – importantly – has been seen to have been outraged. Sometimes the situation has been very visible even if initially ignored internationally: the Holocaust, the instances of genocide in Rwanda or Cambodia, other forms of mass atrocity or war crimes in the former Yugoslavia, Sierra Leone and other countries. Similarly, the absence of records from certain groups of people – such as women, ethnic or other minorities, children – often is only reflected upon after attention has been drawn to them, usually after the group has become politicised, or sometimes after they have become the subject of interested historians. The latter seems often to be the result of the former, as members of the politicised group engage in or push for historical research.

If the information curator is to seek out the margins or the disregarded, rather than wait – or, more accurately, occupy themselves with their many other responsibilities – until some external influence causes their attention to be drawn to a particular set of records, where might they find the margins? Several authors have recommended the activities of the curator in relation to the record as being a place where problematised people or records can be identified or captured. Cook writes of the interactions between the state and those that it wishes to oppress as being rich sources for the records of the marginalised: the sources tend to be in locations of control – prisons, mental institutions, ghettos, concentration camps. Carter is cautious about this – “inviting the marginal in is a very different thing than ... creating the record ourselves” (Carter 2006, pg. 226). In any case what is sought here is a way to locate the liminal, and by extension the marginal, within curation environments that do not, in themselves, necessarily predict where the liminal will be found or what form it will take.

6.2.2 Records Management and the margins

Throughout this research, the phrase “information curator” has been used in order to remove the necessity of repeatedly using phrases to specifically cover both areas of professional activity, and also on the grounds that the arguments were related to both areas. At the same time, it is true that the majority of the literature and data arose from discussion based on archives, rather than on records management, and writers most often (though not exclusively, e.g., Cook and Schwartz 2002) referred to archives, collections and archivists, rather than to active or current records, their environment and their curators. However, the claim that the issues raised are relevant to records management can be sustained. Businesses, institutions and bureaucracies engage in the same construction and control of records, and the same kind of perpetuation of constructed knowledge, as cultural institutions or private individuals. In addition, businesses, institutions and bureaucracies are involved in the same kind of processes of creation and control as an archives. In business practice, and especially in bureaucracies, recorded information is one of the most significant ways for creating, operationalizing and enforcing not only the rules and procedures of business activity but the narrative that the organisation wishes to create about itself.

6.2.3 Counter-culture

Counter-culture is any form of activity that perceives itself, or is perceived, as being an alternative to or in some instances a form of resistance to what is accepted as being mainstream or “normal” culture. How this *countering* manifests itself depends on the nature of the mainstream, and will often have many forms, as people respond to different aspects or elements of mainstream life, rather than to all aspects simultaneously. Even outside of overtly repressive regimes, individuals or groups will

engage in activities intended to resist the dominance of certain ideologies: the Slow Food movement as resistance to the dominance and cheapness of “fast” processed food, promoting local business as opposed to long chains of production, promotion and valuing of “popular” over “high” culture, individuals choosing to live without depending on usual services (such as electricity supply) or on consumerism. There are fringes to counter-culture, too, as with individuals or groups who politicise, or who use as a catalyst for political philosophising, all sorts of ‘ordinary’ activities, like walking or reading. Counter-cultures may, by existing, be political, if they are manifestations of opposition to formal, especially totalitarian, regimes but counter-culture is not the same as protest. At the same time, official reactions to certain manifestation of counter-culture can be used to illuminate or support claims about the “real” financial and power structures that support contemporary society, either globally or in particular countries. For example, local government in some states in the United States have made it illegal for individuals to grow their own food in their front gardens (though it is permitted in back gardens) as property prices and perceived aesthetics about gardening and public spaces is considered a higher priority than food and soil maintenance (Kurutz 2012). This has been used by groups, critical of the advantages that agricultural business has over small-scale agriculture, as a point to use to “prove” or to raise awareness of their criticisms and of the workings of government.

In addition, reactions to counter-culture activity are subjective and are not politically neutral. Those who are part of the mainstream of a socially-liberal democracy, for example, will usually support the civil rights of a diverse range of people including many who historically were deprived of these rights. In this environment those who support groups wishing to limit the rights of (for example), certain racial or ethnic

groups, gay or transgender people, women and so on, would not usually be referred to as a counter-culture, though arguably they are, as their stance is a conscious resistance to mainstream culture. Expressions of counter-culture, and indeed cultural criticisms of mainstream culture (as presented by, for example, political comedians or playwrights) can be the site of intense and sometimes violent negotiation or engagement. At the moment, those who engage in counter-culture activity or have found alternatives to all or some aspects of contemporary life, do not necessarily attribute records or archives a role or an importance in this activity, nor is the archive a site of negotiation or confrontation.

At the same time, if these negotiations are happening then the fact that they do not have a high profile does not mean that the absence of their reflection in the archives is unproblematic. Similarly, records of activities of this sort could be a mechanism for tracing issues that were once 'fringe' and have become more mainstream but without conflict (like ecological awareness or vegetarianism). The movement of experiences or ways of living from the margins of society to the mainstream can be both manifested and reflected in everyday ways, for example in both providing options suitable for people with hitherto-unfamiliar requirements (recycling services) and also drawing attention to these requirements by drawing attention, via for example advertising records, to their availability. The indicators may have been certain kinds of records that were not included in collections, or people who did not appear in records – so, the absence of married women in public service employment records is not a neutral absence, that is to say, it signifies a point where laws inhibiting the rights of women to work (in this case, after they were married) was enacted. The absence of the record is a source of information. The indicators may have been visible when the records were analysed – so, prison records used to compare the

length of sentences given for certain crimes appearing to reflect the race or ethnicity of the accused. But these are still formal instances of inclusion or exclusion – this did not seem to be the only ways in which injustices or exclusions could be engendered. What of day-to-day manifestations of racism, anti-Semitism, ageism and so on - of what might now be called micro-aggressions? Were there records of these things? The value of liminal records may be that they provide the counter to, and the counter-story to, the ‘micro-aggressions’ mentioned above.

6.2.4 Quotidian records

To contemplate engagement with an “other” that is placed in a politically neutral context is a difficult thought experiment and there is little in the professional literature that is concerned with this combination of elements. It is difficult also to identify the kinds of records in which the liminal or sub-threshold “alternative” or poorly-represented aspects of contemporary life might be reflected.

Tyacke (2001) characterises the archives and “the Archives” (i.e., collection and institution) becoming “a battlefield” in situations of tension or political instability, where consensus on what the state and society should be doing breaks down or where the existence of the state “becomes an issue”. This characterisation of the archives, both the collection and the place, as a location for manifestations of political instability is supported by many examples, including Cambodia, South Africa, Northern Ireland and former Soviet states. But these situations did not arise overnight, and there is arguably a question about whether or not archives should be a location where cracks – in social or political stability, in narratives of democracy and justice – can be found, as well as where resulting tensions and crises are enacted.

Reading outside of the literature created by and aimed at professional information curators, there is evidence of research done from the vantage point of considering records as tools rather than as evidence or artefact. Literature of ethnographers drew attention to records functioning in this way (Agar 1986). Within ethnographic literature (or published within academic ethnography) laboratory-based science practice seems to be a rewarding site for those investigating the use of records as tools therein. An alternative way to describe records is as “life documents” – those that “demonstrate the individual in their context” (Plummer 1983 pg. 40).

Arguably, this is more documentation than curation or management, that is, it expects the archivist or records manager to retain the documentation of at least a proportion of the documents created through everyday life, which is qualitatively different to other ideas that identify records as being evidence of transactions or of (in)justice or of being historically significant in themselves. Reflecting this, many of the articles that discuss documents at that level appear, not in information curation journals, but in the *Journal of Documentation* or in ethnographic publications. At the same time, it is not more unreasonable to expect archivists or records managers to be documentalists than it is to expect them to be skilled in relation to supporting people with mental health problems (Etherton 2006) or learning multiple languages (Caswell 2013). Taking a more domestic and less specialist approach, a number of articles investigate the value of interpreting records as tools of everyday life (McKenzie and Davies, 2012; McKenzie 2010) and some such documents might be richer than others in signs of contemporary ideology. It would not be very usual for a records manager to recommend retention of transient or ephemeral working records such as administrative signs, like ‘Reception Desk’, or ‘Back in five minutes’ but they may retrospectively have wished they kept window signs, if any existed, that advised

that certain racial or ethnic groups would not be welcome in a particular public place. Though such a record (or records, since one containing both groups might be an urban myth) might reflect the ideology of the time, it will have been created not as a statement of the ideology but as, in a way, an administrative document or a statement of policy that in turn, becomes a record of how an ideology is enacted within a society.

Even this example is too politically explicit for illustrating 'liminal' records. The politically-liberal rhetoric of the economically-advantaged nations of the world, especially when coupled with information legislation that highlights the risk records can generate, makes it less likely that everyday working records will reflect negative ideologies. "Liminal" is trying to capture the concept of the "other" that is not yet identified as excluded, where it might appear foolish or unconvincing to make a political issue of the "other's" status as "other". For example., if contemporary 'first world' society can be characterised by consumption, by disregard for personal privacy, and a high value placed on advanced social skills, how will the future archives reflect people who are provident, reserved and socially awkward without pathologising them? "Liminal" refers to the routine records created now that, in fifty years' time, people will look at as evidence of the way in which in the practice of everyday life, contemporary ideologies were enacted, where the genesis of future everyday life and ideologies can be identified. The source of these records will be in part generated by individuals, but it may also be a question of looking at business or even formal records in a different light. The sales records of commercial food outlets may demonstrate shifts not only in eating habits but a change in ethos about food (treatment of animals or concerns about the environment or of the sustainability of farming methods, for example) while changes in job or other application forms that

provide tick-boxes to collect personal information may reflect changes in social attitudes (e.g., marital status, gender).

To suggest that importance could or should be attached to currently disregarded records is not to suggest that everything should be kept, or that there will be some rule, or even rule-of-thumb that will mean information curators will get it 'right' somehow in the future. It is in fact probably much less leading to a solution that can be invariably and successfully implemented, and more to do with trying to identify a framework through which boundaries between the liminal or marginalised and the mainstream, where these touch the archives, can be challenged, a dialogue conducted, and the challenges resolved, again and again. Information curators will not be able to reflect all of society, any more than a map includes all parts of the territory it represents, but (to refer back to Gubar once more) may need still to learn how to listen for clicks. Some record types that were routinely ignored in past curation practice have been indicated above, and there are modern equivalents. There seems (anecdotally) to be an expectation of professional anxiety of the proliferation of records created in social media applications such as Facebook or Twitter, or the replacement of, for example, letters or phone calls by applications such as texting on mobile phones. The volume of records created could be overwhelming but only if it is assumed that all these records are worth keeping. This archival impulse is not always purely about an individual who creates, for example, a blog about themselves, or who shares a lot of information on a social networking sites. There are many internet sites providing, either as their main focus or as an additional interest, histories of local areas (however tiny) or shared activities; individuals and groups who are not professionally either historians or information curators have voluntarily engaged in "archivalisation." Few of these articulate a

conscious intention to supplement an incomplete official archives, but evidently, having and providing access to a recorded history is important enough for individuals to spend considerable amounts of time maintaining their archives. On the other hand, Rowat (1993) has suggested that it would be beneficial to blur the distinction, with reference to the documentary record, between fact and fiction, given the createdness of both.

The responses, summarised in Chapter 4, to the challenges of diversifying a traditionally monovocal archives, or at least an archives that recounted the dominant narrative or discourse, have been mainly active and retrospective. That is, the responses have involved archivists taking a particular and concrete action, either to generate another source of historical information (by engaging in a history programme, whether oral or written, thereby creating records that otherwise would not have existed), by being very open to recognising the value of records of different traditions (oral traditions) and a wide variety of record types (non-written, art-based), or by facilitating the creation of archives by an interested group who feel an alliance with each other on the basis of some shared characteristic, based for example on class, race, gender and so on. These activities are not divorced from theory or reflection. Each type of initiative raised questions about the definition of records, about the role and function of professional curators, about power balances and about what constitutes 'archives.' Such responses do not lose their value, effectiveness or relevance, but if the conceptualisation of marginality is further diversified then arguably so too can the range of appropriate responses.

Some responses, however, focused on the archival processes and the interaction between the professional and the records.

Using literary theory as an analytical tool to try to encourage polyphonic archives may, to a degree, still mean the archives is in a passive role in terms of identifying who or what is being left out. Instead of historians or other users of the archives telling us what is required, we look for instruction from other, literary or artistic, sources. Even if it just diversifies our sources, this is already an advantage. But liminality, incorporated as a problematic into archival theory might make information curators alert to the problematic of exclusion, not the specific exclusion of a particular group.

It is easily demonstrated from the literature on this subject that the records of a person who is disregarded or marginalised will themselves be undervalued. Well-known examples are the records of women and records arising from those spheres of life considered to be peculiarly feminine (such as domestic life), or records of racial or ethnic minorities. When these groups have been actively or expressly politicised, significantly greater attention has been paid to their records. The 'rehabilitation' in these two examples did not look necessarily for any large collections but for the presence of women and black or ethnic minorities in existing collections. In consequence, records disregarded because the creator (woman, non-white) or the activity (managing a household, recording folk-music) became retrospectively more highly valued and were made available for researchers. In many cases, therefore, existing and known collections were 're-mapped' and the collections (or, strictly speaking, the finding aids to the collections) no longer represented, like a simplified map, only the 'important' parts of mainstream society. Instead, more details were filled in, making the collection, through its mediating finding aids, a more diverse and detailed representation of lived experienced (even if not a fully comprehensive one).

The disadvantage of this process is that the archives remains a passive force in a dynamic social and political interaction and the information curator has limited opportunity to be the active catalyst. Chapter 6 propose that consideration of or reflection on a polysemic concept of liminality in records potentially has value as an analytical element of the paradigm evolving since the 1990s. This could be an element of a possible 'normal science' developing since the oft-mentioned 'paradigm shift'; for actively identifying under-represented engagements with contemporary socio-political ideology. It does not identify a category of records, or even necessarily the characteristics of particular records, and nor does it seek as a priority to respond to all the different ways in which individuals can now document their lives. Understanding the increasing number and variety of possible sources and forms of records is of course important. The value of liminality lies in its potential for multiplying the perspectives from which records have value.

Different terms are used within the literature to refer to the desired state of the archives, the most usual term being "diverse", as in, the archives housing a diverse collection of records or reflecting social diversity. "Pluralism" has also been used (Upward et al 2011; Gilliland and McKemmish 2011) in the context of the continuum model. It was adapted also by Caswell (2013) in an article proposing that the structure of analysis of religious pluralism in North America – that is, the claimed benefits and the identified dangers or weaknesses – could be used as a template for archival pluralism. "Polyphonic" is used in this research rather than "diverse" or "pluralist." This choice is in part simply because the two other terms have been used before and have existing definitions. At the same time "polyphonic" was more suitable because, having strong associations with music and literature, it is already affiliated, as a word, with culture rather than with social science or political analysis

(as *diverse* is associated) or with users of records (as with *pluralist*). However, in the context of this research and in the context of the archives of contemporary society, *polyphonic* shares at least one characteristic with *pluralist*. Harris (2007) noted of pluralism that it is, and will probably always remain, aspirational: “it is not easily achieved and, perhaps, is not even achievable” (pg. 215). To say that pluralism or polyphony or any similar concept will always remain aspirational is not negative and is not an acceptance of impossibility or defeat. If the boundaries between mainstream society and its “other” are dynamic and transient, then that which attempts to encapsulate or reflect these shifting relationships cannot be itself fixed. Polyphony is aspirational in the sense that it recognises constant negotiation, change and re-negotiation, and therefore, if it is a success, it is a constant characteristic of engagement. The achievement of polyphony may never be something that can be captured in a process (the points at which this kind of engagement can be practiced may be part of a process but the engagement itself will not be automated) because it must always respond to the tensions, exclusions, resistances and so on as they are manifested at any given time. Caswell refers to the “multiverse” in her proposal for religious pluralism, as being a means through which “difference and conflict are discussed and only sometimes resolved.” It may be too much of a claim to place the archives, formal or not, as the location for discussion and potential resolution of difference and conflict. But Caswell also characterises the multiverse as “a messy space” that causes “discomforts” (Caswell 2013), and a truly polyphonic archives could certainly have such characteristics, since its function would be to disrupt, rather than to sustain, accepted narratives.

In writing on power and silence, Carter characterises power in predominantly political terms: “the powerful in society are typically aligned with the state and its apparatus”;

he gives the examples of the military and the police, and any group that “can exert an influence that outweighs their numbers” (Carter 2006, pg. 217). The powerless – and by extension, potentially the voiceless, the marginal – do not have this influence; Carter specifically identifies as marginal those who possess “dissenting views”, who will then be silenced (Carter 2006, pg. 218). Again, the margin has an active aspect: the views held are not simply different or alternative, they are dissenting, even though the ways they can be silenced include the passive “through ignorance and chauvinism” (Carter 2006,pg. 219).

6.3 Summary

The New Yorker magazine has been the source at least once before of a cartoon used to illustrate an archival point (Brothman 1992) and so may be used again. A 1989 edition of the magazine contained a cartoon captioned ‘James Joyce’s To-Do list’ which included reminders to pick up the laundry, drop off library books, ‘forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race’ and to call his mother. The penultimate phrase is a quotation from Joyce’s ‘Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man’ (Joyce 1916, pg. 317) The humour of the cartoon lies in the juxtaposition of the banality of a to-do list and the almost limitless ambition of the actual quotation from the writer. How does one translate an all-encompassing, trans-social, trans-historical, ambition into steps to take towards achievement thereof? In what way could the information curation profession(s) augment existing mechanisms for engaging with records that are vulnerable to dismissal as valueless, even more than vulnerable to deliberate destruction? The focus here is on the record, not on the individuals who created them since, as has been demonstrated in Chapter 4 and 5, the marginal, the position of liminality, is always occupied by someone and is not necessarily a negative or deliberate siting by society. Questions about the liminal

and the marginal in society – contemporary or historical - can unquestionably be also entangled with questions of justice, injustice and reconciliation at domestic and international levels. On the other hand, they can be also simply questions of liminality and marginality as elements of a society that do not necessarily need resolution. Nonetheless, that they are factors that are not reflected in the retained records of that society means that the record, the archive, the trace left available, is incomplete and biased.

As discussed in Chapter 1 and Chapter 3, a number of archival theorists applied aspects, especially deconstructive aspects, of postmodernist philosophies as articulated in particular by Derrida to archives and the curation of information. These applications were heavily informed by questions of justice, injustice and reconciliation. In her introductory chapter to *Critical Theory for LIS*, Leckie (2010) notes philosophers who developed Marx's analysis of modes of production and extended it to "a broader critique of society and culture as a whole", and who, through their analysis, "demonstrate [] a commitment to celebrating those who have been defined as Other by those in power" (pg. vii). Recognizing the importance of cultural, rather than specifically political or economic, aspects in the creation of society makes available more routes by which archival theory can develop mechanisms for engaging with the marginal, by drawing together the cultural and the political significances of records and the archives. Though there are a variety of critical approaches – and in their presentation of the critical theories that arguably are of use and relevance to Library and Information Services, Leckie, Givens, Buschman and their contributors summarise 23 of them – literary criticism is in keeping with moving the focus away from the creators of the texts, back to the texts themselves.

Focusing on the texts, the records in the custody of an archivist or records manager, is given precedence here as a way of seeking diversity in the archives, or drawing attention to absences and gaps. Doing so is intended to encourage curators to be active seekers after diversity, alert to questions of bias and absence, rather than responders – however thorough and successful – to other people's actions. It is also intended to try to reflect what information curators are professionally *directly* responsible for: texts, not people. The influence that curators can have on either supporting or thwarting regimes, the influence that has been extensively analysed elsewhere by Harris, Ketelaar, Caswell and others, is the result of their curation of records, and is manifested through how they professionally handle records. Lastly, this approach tries to take cognisance of the lived working experience of information curators, as it is reflected in the literature, and as it has been expressed at professional conferences and working groups. It is probable that a strong argument could be made for the value of applying ethnographic methods of engagement and documentation in order to enrich the record of a society or a business but the probability also is that it would be possible only in very particular types of organisations. The ideas and conclusions of, for example, Dorothy Smith or Benedict Anderson might be relevant and valuable but they may not be practically available. The very least that can be expected is that the archivist or the records manager will deal with texts. It is very probable that many will not have the time or other resources to allow the kind of analysis and reflection proposed in the following chapter. In that case, though, they are also unlikely to have the resources for any other kind of engagement with the margins either. However, the opportunity to engage with text may present more easily than engagement with individuals or groups. Perhaps the

most important recommendation then is that the professional mind be prepared to look for absence and counter-narrative, and to act on it when it is perceived.

Chapter 6 analysed the responses of information curators to the problematic of marginality and exclusion in the archives. It drew out from the data two important characteristics of these responses: they were retrospective and they were active. The responses so far have been to instances that have already been politicised, meaning that the professional response has been, necessarily, retrospective. This is not a negative characteristic necessarily, and is arguably unsurprising, since the archives is itself a product of society as well as a reflection thereof and, in consequence, hardly can be omniscient and free from socio-political influence. Secondly, the responses were mainly dynamic or, to put it another way, they involved the information curator actively seeking a connection or interaction with external groups or communities, or seeking to accommodate new material or new types of material. Again, this is not a negative characteristic, but this kind of engagement is not available to all information curators. This factor arguably limits the range of curators who can meaningfully engage with marginality, either of people or of records, even if the curator wished to do so. Equally, it also may encourage the expectation that the matter is of concern only to curators who have responsibility for records that are already known to have a relevance to a particular instance of marginality or exclusion.

Drawing on the data used in Chapter 5 Chapter 6 also presents a possible re-conceptualisation of marginality. This re-conceptualisation moves away from the existing focus on instances of marginality that are already recognised, and away also from the expectation that marginality is necessarily a negative or problematic factor. Instead, it seeks to recognise marginality and “otherness” as inevitable elements of

social and political interaction. It seeks also to draw attention to the ways in which the margins – whether they are problematic or not – can be manifested in stable, domestic environments.

Chapter Seven

7.1 Analysis and Re-interpretation

The literature written by and for information curators, archivists and records managers, as well as museum professionals and others, reveals a lasting concern with bias in what is retained as the traces of lives and how best to curate – or, indeed, to not curate – these traces. Chapter 5 presented a short over-view of the approaches discussed in the literature for augmenting the ‘official’ record of events by maintaining oral as well as written records, by engaging with and encouraging community archives, by recognising or valuing as ‘a record’ or a ‘memory text’ a wide variety of information sources, including performances and tattoos. Chapter 6 analysed the characteristics of the majority of these approaches. It proposed that professional engagement with ‘the other’ in society could be extended and engaged not only by seeking to take action but by encouraging reflection on ways in which value for archival theory can be drawn from a wider range of philosophical and rhetorical frameworks than heretofore. To work with archives and records is to accept that they are culturally and politically significant, and therefore the profession should have something meaningful to say about how it engages with these elements of society, and this analysis should be informed by a wide and sophisticated rhetorical foundation. At the same time, there can be difficulty of linking theory or ideology to action, a difficulty in translating the theory of the problematised archives into something that can be acted upon in the “real world”, and the connection between the dominant socio-political ideology of a contemporary society and how it

is manifested and embedded in quotidian ways. Schein, like Schwartz, is concerned by the gap between the “theoretical implications of the problematized archives and knowing what it means ‘on the ground’” (Schein 2009 pg. 92)

The aim of Chapter 7 is to propose an additional way to engage with the complexities arising from a wish to respond to the biased archives. In doing so it draws attention to the importance of the information curators’ engagement with the material for which they are responsible, rather than on establishing connections with people whose presence in or absence from, or relationship with, official records is problematic. It proposes a particular rhetorical and analytical approach to be an appropriate mechanism for engagement with the fact or problematic of marginality, that would be an addition the current practices for such engagement as outlined in Chapters 4 and 5. This additional mechanism or framework may possibly provide a means for a wider range of curators to engage, as it focuses on text and process rather than on more complex relationships between the information curator and people whose lives (or aspects of whose lives) are not easily reflected in formal or official records. Although many of the responses to this issue have been practical and active, a conceptualisation of marginality was built up within archival theory which, as argued in Chapter 5, is incomplete.

In his article on the nature of memory and of the past, Brothman invites archivists to “reconsider their working concept of memory” and to reflect on “not only how archives keep records of the past but also how, in their discourse and practices, they help to preserve a certain concept of what “the past” means” (Brothman 2001 pg. 50). This is an instance of encouraging information curators to re-consider the implication of a routine professional activity, to engage critically with how their practices help to create the meaning of the words that they use. Cook quotes

Lyotard's definition of postmodernism: *an incredulity towards metanarrative* (Cook 2001 1984 pg. xxiv). This incredulity towards metanarrative helped to render more multifarious the way in which records were valued, encouraging a greater alertness to the importance of the records of – either created by or about – people on the margins of society. Harris encouraged a *hospitality to the "other"*, and a combination of these approaches – an acceptance on principle of contingency, suspicion of what appears to be hegemonic and canonical, and alertness to that which is fringe, disreputable or unimportant – arguably can only serve to enrich and diversify the archives, and the interpretation of archives.

7.1.1 Value of philosophy in information curation

Many western philosophies that underlie theories that developed later are concerned with the nature of existence, epistemology and human understanding, or analysis of political structures and human conditions. Postmodernism is possibly the best known philosophy (or collation of philosophies) that has been drawn into archival theory, as previously discussed in the Introduction in Chapter 1. Unlike historians like G.R. Elton, Callum Brown assessed the impact of postmodern philosophy on history in a very positive light, as having “tremendously stimulated” history as a profession, and having “caused excitement, thoughtfulness, the search for works of theory to engage with or refute new ideas” (Brown 2005 p 180). That effect in itself should be enough to encourage information curators to seek actively to draw philosophical debates into professional rhetoric and theory. While “relevance” in information curation literature is often expressed in terms of business relevance (establishing what customers or users require, demonstrating a business or financially-measurable benefit) it is equally arguable that an understanding of the philosophies and ideologies available to interpret the world and human interaction is also fundamental to relevance, for a

profession concerned with the traces of the world and human interaction. This is not to say that the importance of philosophy or of conceptual frameworks or rhetorical stances have been ignored in writing on information curation theory. Bastian recommended post-colonial scholarship as being a valuable way of engaging with curation theory and practice, holding the view that it “offers an opportunity to conceptualize and apply a wider, more generous and more inclusive archival lens to the relationships between communities and records” (Bastian 2006, pg. 268). Similarly, Carter draws on feminist literary theory in his recommendation to “listen to silences” (Carter 2006, pg. 224). Like Bastian, Carter is extending the rhetoric beyond the group to which it first referred – colonised people in Bastian’s context, women in Carter’s – because the feminist tactic of listening to silence “can be applied to any marginalised group.”

Although many of the actions taken to redress the perceived imbalance or inequality of the archives were active, some contributors to the literature focused on more fragmentary and reflective approaches. Such approaches were not specifically intended to redress the problem of marginalisation in the archives but to investigate questions, or the implications of questions, that the debate surrounding marginalisation and injustice in the archives raised. Without wishing to create a false binary, or dichotomy, between ‘active’ and ‘reflective’ responses, it is possible to note that some articles focus less on engagement with the people to whom particular records are relevant and more on engagement between professional information curators and the records for which they have responsibility.

While it might not be surprising that information curation as a profession did not generate or develop new theories or philosophies, it also seemed to be consistently exploiting only some of those already available. In reading papers by the authors

mentioned in Chapters 1 and 3 – in particular Harris, Cook, McKemmish postmodernism was the theory (or set of theories, or ideological framework) that was most often explicitly mentioned. Perhaps this was because of Derrida's well-known reference to 'archives,' perhaps because writers like Verne Harris used it so deftly to break open many ideas about the archives. But that postmodernism could be relevant and could inform archival theory is not necessarily the final word and other analytical practices or frameworks could also have value for the on-going development of professional theory.

7.1.2 The cultural role of archivists

There has been a consistent tendency to review the role or roles of archivists and information managers in response to changes in demand from users, changes in cultural or political expectations, changes in legislation or in business practice. As argued in Chapter 5, many of the responses to the challenges found by practitioners trying to redress a biased record have themselves been very practical. While there have been many contributions to the on-going development of the theory that underpins professional practice, there have been many practitioners who have operationalised some aspect of the intent to redress. This might take the form of searching through a collection for traces of a group (Maliniemi 2009), reviewing systems and procedures to establish what changes need to be wrought to ensure that a "suite of rights in records" can be delivered (Evans et al 2015) or recommending negotiation of a "participant relationship model" between creators and subjects of records (Iacovino 2010).

That these responses are practical does not suggest that they are not responding purely to practical demand but sometimes also to challenges arising from reconsideration of theoretical assumptions (such as the nature of "the cataloguing

voice”, Newman 2012). This is also true of the responses to other questions about the role of the archivist. In the last 20 years, information curators have adopted business concepts and vocabulary. Different commentators have identified changes in the role of information curators, particularly archivists, changes that can be perceived as good or bad; being part of “the production of the legitimating metanarrative of modernity” or production of a “culturally cohesive citizenry” or being “defenders of heritage” (Dodge, 1997) may be open to interpretation as to their value.

Questions about the significance and cultural importance of the record did not start with the introduction of postmodernism to archival theory. In 1986, Helen Willa Samuels reflected on the relationship between the control of the past and the appraisal decisions made by archivists, as well as on the way in which the archival collection of an individual has been created (Samuels, 1986). How has the archival profession sought a new role? In essence, and perhaps inevitably, by taking on the rhetoric of the dominant discourse which, in a society structured increasingly on consumerist capitalism, is a discourse of consumption. There are individual articles on the collections of, for example, left-wing or workers’ material, essays on ‘women’s archives’, on politicised women or women in politicised situations, or on religious records, records of visual or literary artists. But information curators and theoreticians have not been very active in engaging in a sustained political analysis of archives, records and their curation, to understand how the archives is produced (for example, in Marxist terms) or consumed as influenced by consumer capitalism. Nonetheless, aspects of and activities within contemporary society are predominantly valued in terms of, and subservient to, economic expectations and demands. Researchers become users, cultural institutions are expected to become

profit-making, places traditionally dedicated to research become places dedicated to fulfilling a particular kind of desire to consume, and in some instances expected to replicate places of social interaction. Services, and the priorities given to more specialist work (e.g., cataloguing), are expected to reflect the immediate interests of contemporary users, rather than reflect any inherent value of the records themselves or the needs of potential future users. Prising open existing roles and expectations is often painful but usually is not without some benefit. The 'opening up' of the archives, or perceptions about the archives, the "loss of authority of the intellectual elite over culture" (Dodge 1997, pg. 121), even the application of commercial rather than cultural values on archives in particular and information curation in general has not been an entirely negative process. But the development of new roles and expectations, the operationalisation of these new expectations, and even the further development of the theory underpinning professional practice has been philosophically thin. Since few information curators, or information services, wield power even in organisations and institutions that are primarily either cultural or information-producing, the absorption of the vocabulary and standards of commerce in these environments is not unexpected. It becomes necessary to speak and write in recognisable terms in order to be understood by those who have the power over the distribution of resources and support. The field of professional rhetoric and theory, to which practitioners should be able to look for guidance and stimulation, there should itself be stimulated by as wide a range of theoretical and philosophical influence as possible, in order to enrich and diversify practice. If 'the record', whether housed formally in an archival institution or deliberately retained by private individuals or simply surviving by chance in either a public or private home, is truly a

reflection or a trace of contemporary society, then the responsible professional should be able to contextualise it as richly as possible..

The development of the theory upon which information curation practice is based has drawn from other professions, sometimes because of a similarity of activity (in the case of libraries and museums) and sometimes out of necessity, because of the environments in which practitioners work (in the cases of business concepts and law). Traditionally, archives and history, or the practice of history, had a close relationship. Bolotenko (1983) reiterated the belief in the importance of this relationship and of the ability of the archivist to engage meaningfully with history and historiography). The use and value of archives has also been identified by those practising in or reflecting on other disciplines. The role of archives relative to collective memory is investigated by Josias (2011), specifically in relation to post-apartheid South Africa, often with a focus on the archives as a location. Here, location means not just the location for records on a particular subject, or as the location of the absence of such records, but a location in which certain things – memory, social and power roles – are enacted or performed following Butler’s theory of performativity (Butler 1999). The archives as a site for (ever-changing) performance or negotiation has been examined by Ketelaar (2008); Cook and Schwartz (2002) and others.

Other interpretations of the role of the information curator were expressed. Influenced by the relationship demonstrated by Harris between the record (and by extension, the information curator) and justice, Carter characterises information curators as “political players”, who must “confront and challenge the oppression that is evidenced in the records”. This is in fact a call to radicalise the profession by

making it a site for active political engagement, a move that would necessitate considerable debate amongst information curators.

7.2 Others in the Echo-Chamber: The philosophical frameworks of other lenses

As argued in Chapter 1, the reflection on archives in light of postmodernist ideas was probably the first time that a particular philosophical stance was a catalyst for reflection and change, in the sense of being itself the means of responding to socio-political situations of the time. Perhaps it is time to reflect again, not on the changes that have been or should yet be made, but on the catalyst itself – are there other possible influences on information curation theory that have not yet been exploited? Besides specific philosophical frameworks, other practitioners have reflected in the literature on how they have drawn ideas from a variety of activities in order to enrich archival practice and its underlying theory. Caswell (2013), for example, in discussing the possibilities of pluralism in archives draws on analysis (and personal experience) of development of religious pluralism in the United States. This section below outlines some other areas where there has been influence or where influence could potentially have been of use, to demonstrate the variety available. This section will deal with those other practices or theories that seem, from the research done, could be useful in guiding practice towards greater plurality and inclusiveness.

In *Archives and Recordkeeping* (Brown 2014), seven chapters were brought together with the specific intention of drawing attention to the importance of concepts and theories, of “fuzziness”, to the practices of information curators, and to the importance of using theory, not to ‘find’ or even articulate a truth in any objective sense, but “as a fluid and changing approach or way of thinking” (Brown 2014 pg. xvii). One chapter is devoted to a selection of Western philosophies – excluding the “technocratic borrowings” from business, law or information technology – that has

informed the professional theoretical discourse. The chapter (Hardiman 2014) gives an overview of the ideas of the most influential philosophers within different paradigms from Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (Kant 1781) to the "epoch of post-everything" which produced poststructural texts such as Barthes' 'The Death of the Author' (Barthes, 1967), postmodernist texts such as Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition* (Lyotard, 1979), Saïd's work on postcolonialism, *Orientalism* (Saïd, 1978), and Butler's poststructuralist feminism, reflected in, for example, *Gender Trouble* (Butler, 1990). All of these philosophical stances are presented as ways of potentially understanding – or accepting the incomprehensible nature of – the world as it is experienced, and many aspects of culture have engaged with ideas from these philosophies as they have been presented and debated.

Hardiman's chapter includes reference to the authors within the archives and recordkeeping profession who have drawn on these philosophical debates to the enrichment of the professional theory. The wholesale reconsideration of the profession in the context of postmodernism by Harris, Cook, Brothman and others is well-known, and in her introduction to the book, Brown gives a short summary of this debate. Other theoreticians within the profession have drawn on other ideas: Yeo engages with speech-act theory (Yeo, 2010), Tourney with the documentalist ideas of Briet and Otlet, and Bastian with postcolonialism (2009). However, postmodernism, especially the work of Derrida, has been the most influential school or philosophical stance; it seems undeniably to be the one that has stimulated most debate and extrapolation within the professional literature.

As Brown notes in her introduction – and has been noted in other material in the literature – there have been, and very likely still are, information curators who see the profession as a practical one, that benefits little from theory. Even those who

may not go as far as equating theory for the profession as “much ado about shelving” (Roberts, 1987) might still be hard pressed to find time to investigate what can often be difficult ideas or dense prose, or to apply ideas of, for example, Habermas or Kristeva to their everyday jobs. But it may not always be necessary to return to the source of the idea. If empiricism, positivism, Hegelian dialectic, Nietzschean nihilism and so on are an influential part of the cultural and political landscape in which a society is operating, then there is an echo-chamber in which their influence is resounded. There are other professions and areas of cultural practice, besides the curation of information, that will either expressly take on, or will absorb and reflect, ideas and challenges presented. The more open the information curation profession can be to critical theoretical influences from other professions or other aspects of contemporary cultural life then the wider and more diverse the professional theory can be, by learning how other related contemporaries have adapted or rejected new ideas. What follows is an analysis of philosophical engagement outside of the profession that have a demonstrable relevance to areas of curation practice.

7.2.1 The art of selection

The foregrounding of the process of appraisal and selection of records can be compared with the aims of artists between Impressionism and the end of World War II. From the late 19th century, many artists drew attention to banal things becoming the focus of creative attention. Artists such as Monet and Duchamp implied many questions about art by focusing on objects (haystacks, a urinal) that previously were not considered by, for example, the French Académie des Beaux-Arts proper subjects of art. Similarly, postmodernism did not - any more than any other philosophy – appear out of nowhere. Dadaism, the anarchic “anti-art” movement

within visual arts emerging during World War I that tried, in the words of Miró, to “assassinate art”, had trends in its thought that presaged postmodernism (Dodge, 1997, pg. 119). If at the beginning of the 20th century, information curators had drawn on the art theory of, say, Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque or Emily Carr (Brettell, 1979), perhaps the profession could have found value in going through Modernism before engaging with postmodernism. Much of modernist art arose from a rejection of the ‘establishment’ art, a rejection of the ‘proper’ subjects of artistic representation, of the function of art, of the accepted materials and tropes for creating art. Though this rejection began with the Impressionist painters in France, later the Cubist artists in particular turned away from visual art as a finished product, and the still-lives of Picasso and of Braque showed all angles of the objects they presented and usually included the construction lines that normally would be obliterated by the final image. Though many of these images are now considered canonical, they were sometimes shocking and unwelcome at the time. Even Braque hated his close colleague Picasso’s *Les Femmes d’Alger*, which Picasso would not show to his friends (Cox, 2001), and the Society of Independent Artists refused to show Duchamp’s *Fountain*; even though all works of art submitted to them were expected to be displayed, they rejected the work on the grounds that it was not art.

There are similarities between writing on art of that time and writing on postmodern analysis of archival theory in terms of the kind of vocabulary used and the points being touched upon. In both cases there was a desire to draw attention to the significant difference between a final product that is a representation of something, and the thing itself (it is a painting, not a pipe, in Magritte’s famous example). Modernist painters also pursued the more radical approach of the Impressionists in

relation to selecting what they painted. The Impressionists were occasionally heavily criticised for choosing subjects not usually considered suitable for or worthy of representation in art. This lack of suitability was either because they were too banal (e.g., haystacks, such as Monet painted) or the subject was not depicted in a familiar way, e.g., a woman looking directly at the viewer instead of having an averted gaze, in the case of Renoir (Brettell 1979; Cox 1992). There was a move towards a transparency and honesty about the constructed nature of the end result and a focus on the fact that the end result – the archives, the painting - represents, not reality, but how the individual artist has seen the world. This is not to suggest that selection or appraisal is an art form. Rather, it is an illustration of the applicability of the theory of another discipline being potentially relevant to the development of information curation theory.

7.2.2 Historiography

That records, archives in particular, act as a handmaiden to history, is a familiar saw, and the value of the archivist as historian was the subject of a short debate in the literature in the late 1980s (Bolotenko 1983; Cox 1984; Spadoni et al 1984). It is certainly true that historians, whether academic, amateur or antiquarian were traditionally the most frequent users of historic records and it could be argued that anyone wishing to consult a record for anything other than an operational activity is using it for historical (i.e., as opposed to business or judicial) purposes. What does not seem to have happened, or at least not in a consistent, reflective or coordinated way, is the engagement by the profession with historiography, rather than in the conduct of historical research. Even in the area of postmodernism, there had been profound engagement by academic historians with ideas of deconstruction and narrative long before these ideas became normalised within archival/information

curation discourse. There were strong views of historians in favour of and opposed to postmodernist ideas, from embracing what some saw as postmodernism's inevitable conclusion in the impossibility of writing history to Elton's rejection of postmodernism as "the intellectual equivalent of crack" (Elton 1991 pg. 41). Despite this, it was many years after this debate that postmodernist ideas were introduced to archival theory and there remains little influence drawn from wider cultural, political and intellectual life into professional reflection.

7.2.3 Ethnographic Practice

It is possible that ethnographic methods might lead archivists to a wider range of options about how to 'document' everyday life, though they would need to have a framework in which to interpret the resulting records; perhaps it should be in conjunction with documentation of everyday life. There are ways in which ethnography, particularly the institutional ethnography initiated and developed by Dorothy E Smith which focused on everyday experiences, could be of value, as has been proposed for researchers (Gracy, 2004). Such an approach applied to information management might be of particular benefit for organisations pursuing the elusive goal of institutional knowledge management (Trace 2006, 2016). In some cases, oral history projects have indicated an awareness of an ethnographic, as well as a narrative, element, and in interviewing people who had been excluded, either entirely or in part, from official records, sought to "tap into the actual lived experience" (Scheinberg 2000, pg. 205), or to record the emotions or "the daily mundanities" of an individual's life (Pymer 2011 pg. 192). In Scheinberg's review of the study by an anthropologist, Cruickshank, of three Native/First Nations women elders, she draws particular and favourable attention to Cruickshank's differentiation between oral history and oral tradition. The former seems to be equated with

“anecdotes and the narrators’ experiences as interpreted by the interviewer”, whereas the latter augmented narrative with songs, names of people and places, and attempts to “document[s] change in social reality and investigate[s] narrative forms by talking about, remembering and interpreting everyday life” (Scheinberg 2000 pg. 209, quoting Cruikshank 1990 pg. 3)

7.2.4 Ecology and the Environment

The advent of personal computers inspired reflection on some aspects of the impact on the environment of office procedures; these reflections were predominantly found in material specifically related to records management. The capacity to share information electronically rather than in hard copy was expected to significantly reduce the amount of paper required in an office, the amount having increased after photocopiers became economically viable for the majority of businesses. This expectation seems not to have been fulfilled; although the claim that a document was copied more often, up to 19 times, does not seem to have a reliable source, Wolf (2012) points out that any effort to improve systems in order to reduce use of resource can lead to Jevon’s Paradox, whereby use of resource increases.

One of the virtues attributed to digitisation as an alternative to housing large amounts of paper records was that, in addition to saving space, material would be more easily available and that therefore it was a “greener” option, as it prevented the destruction of trees to create paper and would mean fewer researchers would have to travel to the repository. However, no analysis appears in the professional data that looks at the full chain of production (i.e., the production, repair and disposal of all the hardware and software required to store records on-line and to facilitate individual access).

Such reflections as there have been on ecology in relation to information curation have focused on the practicalities: how can the “carbon footprint” of curation activities be reduced? No-where in the literature is a very fundamental question asked: is investment of resource in the maintenance of the traces of human activity affordable at all, in ecological terms?

However, there is an aspect of this debate that does not seem to have been pursued but which presents a challenge to the fundamental understanding of and attitude to information curation. In his 1993 reflection on ‘The Archivist in the Age of Ecology’, Taylor quotes Metzner’s view that the world is in a transitional stage from a mechanised, industrialised world to an “ecological age” (Taylor 1993, pg. 203). In Metzner’s view (though not Taylor’s), the “information age” is “fundamentally mechanistic, as in the previous industrial era, characterised by continuing mass production, narrow economic models of efficiency and unbridled competition,” and that this approach is detrimental to any attempt to ameliorate environmental and ecological dangers. Taylor notes the paucity of records “bearing witness to the equal validity and legal right of survival of the natural” in comparison to those offering the same advantages to human beings. In his specific analyses of the role of archivists in an age of ecology Taylor touches briefly more on how professionals and their institutions would respond to their new working environment, if (or when) for example, centralised governmental control breaks down and fuels become scarce. The more challenging questions are related to how will information curators respond in terms of what would be valued and selected for retention, in a world where the activities and needs of human beings and their “byzantine affairs” are recalibrated in favour of “a kind of integrated history which might well encompass the whole planet” (Taylor 1993, pg. 209).

7.2.5 Religion

Religion has been a powerful social and political influence in most cultures for centuries, and texts, as well as exegesis and textual analysis, are central to, for example, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Many curators have written about religious archives, but only two have analysed information curation in terms of broader or more abstract religious concepts: Matthews (2015) suggested that radical atheism is a suitable theoretical framework for archival work while Kari (2007) questioned the absence of spirituality from archival and curation processes. Taylor, in his 1993 article referred to above, drew particular attention to the writings of two theologians about the need for some form of religious or metaphysical response in order to guide a recalibration of values “from an anthropocentric to a biocentric norm of reference” (Taylor 1993, pg. 204). In a slightly different vein, Caswell specifically recommended the lessons of religious pluralism “in order to better engage cultural differences” (Caswell 2013, pg. 274). Here, Caswell is proposing that the profession could, in dealing with issues of marginalisation and diversity, take guidance not from religious doctrine or theology, but from religion as a social and cultural phenomenon. She proposes adherence to principles of religious pluralism that were formulated by United States academics: energetic engagement, understanding, strengthened commitment, and dialogue. These are balanced against an equal number of problems within religious pluralism: purported universality, inattention to power, silencing dissent, and collapsing of difference (Caswell 2013, pg. 280).

These, then, are a selection of cultural areas that arguably have some elements that could be of influence on archival theory, some of which have already received attention from theoreticians within the profession. It is very probable that an argument could be made for any one of these being suitable as a guide or a

framework for enriching information curation theory. Equally, the role and activities, and the philosophy or philosophies underlying professional practice, could very probably benefit from analysis through the philosophical lens of any of the schools of thought outlined in the first section of this chapter.

As discussed in Chapter 6, the institutional curation of records is often lagging behind the politicisation of areas of contemporary life, or the response to institutional injustice. In these areas, and in the cultural areas briefly outlined above, an information curator would most likely become engaged with 'non-mainstream' records due to some connection with people already engaged with or affected by the politicised area or the injustice. This connection might be personal, a personal political view, or professional view, the result of working with or employed by a related collection or entity. But if the aim to reduce the bias of 'the archive' is a valid professional objective, it is not sufficient to leave achievement of that aim to those who have some reason to be interested, and instead should be a responsibility of all information curators. How then could engagement with the 'non-mainstream', the marginal, the liminal, the alternative and the counter-cultural be achieved, without the concomitant expectation that the information curator be a particular type of person, holding particular types of views? How might the other cultural influences, discussed above, inform an information curator's practice in order to increase the richness of the records left by contemporary society, and to decrease accidental bias?

To use a most unlikely scenario - an archivist accepts the idea that historical narratives are constructed, and wishes to find a way of disrupting the narrative. She or he takes inspiration, not from usual canons of professional literature, but from the Situationist artists and theorists of the mid-twentieth century, and decides to perform the archival equivalent of the Situationist 'dérive', which was essentially a form of

deliberately getting lost in a city. The process of getting lost among the documents and disrupting the professional expectation of organising and describing a collection might be intellectually stimulating. It might result in a narrative no more constructed than one developed by more orthodox means and, in the long-term, the finding aid produced might succeed in actively drawing out information about people, groups or experienced life that are currently disregarded or marginalised, by virtue of allowing connections to emerge. It would certainly reify Brothman's hypothesis that "archives are also effective participants in the process that foment the disorder which they continually feel compelled to resist" (Brothman 1991, pg. 86) On the other hand, it might not necessarily make the collection accessible in expected ways to contemporary users, and the archivist's actions will be difficult to explain or justify to superiors, funders or fellow-professionals unless there has been debate and discussion at a theoretical level in advance and concurrently.

7.3 The Curator and the Text

The previous chapters have presented the argument that there is still room for development in means by which information curators can try to ensure that the records in their custody are diverse. An answer may be to focus, not on the injustices or minorities of the curator's contemporary society, but on the relationship between the curator and that for which, in some form, all curators are responsible - the record. Moreover, the reason for seeking new ways to think about archives is to facilitate identifying the liminal, even the absent, in a collection (closed or open). This relationship, between the curator and the record, therefore must be a critical, analytical one for this purpose. If the one thing that an information curator must be concerned with, even in the absence of any other social or political interest, is the record and its context, it is the critical analysis of the record, or the text, that can help

to provide the means of engagement with the under-represented aspects of contemporary society. Without equating the record with the literary text in terms of informational value, arguably it is this rhetorical framework that can provide a valuable framework for analysis. The application of literary criticism to non-literary (or at least non-fictional) content is not limited to analysis of individual texts, or even to all of the texts in a particular collection or created by an individual organisation. There is a short introduction to the theory of intertextuality below, and this theory – that texts are developed from, influenced by and in a way partially created by texts already in existence – allows records to be visualised as actively part of all the records that will constitute the traces left by contemporary society.

The data includes an article already cited, an assessment by Cook of the importance of postmodernism for archives (Cook 2001). In this article Cook quotes John Ralston Saul's discussion of ideology, "the starkest form of metanarrative", and draws attention particularly to what Saul describes as "one of ideology's most depressing effect", that of passivity. If one way to be hospitable to "the other" is to be aware of and to resist ideology and metanarrative, then passivity, too, must be resisted.

A number of other authors have proposed the value of focusing on the way in which the curator interacts with the records in their custody in order to diversify and enrich the resulting archives. Bastian recommends an innovative use of the principle of provenance, an extension of ideas already expressed by Cook, Nesmith and Ketelaar (1997, 2002 and 2001 respectively), whereby the provenance of the record becomes the totality of the community that created it. However she indicates difficulties in practice (Bastian 2009 pg. 284).

7.4 What is Literary Criticism?

Proposing that the techniques developed and deployed in the practice of literary theory presupposes an interpretation of 'the archives' as a text, both in terms of a single collection and in terms of the traces of society as a whole. Literary theory is not a single set of actions, but an over-arching term for a stable of techniques used to critically analyse literary texts.

The earliest development of literary theory, through the Renaissance and the 17th and 18th centuries, was strongly influenced by Aristotle's *Poetics* and the development of theories regarding different genres of literature, and developed ideas about aesthetics. In this research, most aesthetic aspects will not be of value in textual analysis of archives, because these aspects are concerned with the self-conscious intentions or unintentional achievements of the author in relation to imaginative or creative elements of writing. Qualities of imagination or elegance of expression, for example, while they may well have a place in the archives, are not necessarily beneficial to diversity. A profoundly different interpretation of the 'correct' production of literature and other cultural expressions and of the social role thereof developed from the last decade of the 19th century until about 1940. It was during this time that many writers developed theories, and demonstrated them in practice through their own fictional writing, focused on, in essence, disrupting the previously-canonical narrative style, including use of stream-of-consciousness and impressionistic writing, non-linear narratives, and unreliable narrators. Though Modernist criticism was not hegemonic, there was a strong inclination to express the difficulties of individuals interacting with modern political life; it was the stage at which specifically feminist criticism began to develop, and it also drew in other analytical frameworks, particularly those of the structuralist linguist de Saussure, also

an influence later on poststructuralism. The later end of Modernism, influenced by de Saussure and other writers on linguistics, produced Formalism; the form of this that became most dominant in the newly-developing forum of academic literary criticism was New Criticism, dominated by Modernist poets rather than by linguists.

As records are not created as fiction, they are not judged in literary terms of, for example, aesthetics or their use of rhetorical features (though as will be discussed later, even records often conform to an established or genre rhetoric). There are, however, some points where ideas introduced into archival theory overlap with approaches in literary theory, and as a formal theory, literary criticism had its trends and its dominant voices who produced canonical texts and defined, or at least strongly influenced, how certain kinds of literature were valued.

7.4.1 General Approach of Literary Criticism:

Literary criticism is essentially a reading practice: “the way a reader approaches a text, how the reader negotiates her way through the text, how the reader constructs knowledge from the text and how the reader uses the resulting knowledge” (Paré and Smart 1994 pg. 152 quoted in MacNeil 2012, pg. 495). To apply literary criticism, regardless of which theory is preferred (the Blackwell’s *Guide* lists 16 approaches) is to read the text with the assumption that more is being said than appears on the page: that the words on the page are referring to other words on other pages in order to support or criticise or confound a particular ideology.

If, as MacNeil (2012) contends, many users lack the background knowledge, or “archival intelligence” or knowledge of the “meta-genres” to successfully use finding aids, then the curator may have the same gap in their requisite knowledge if they approach the records for which they are responsible as a social text. They will need to develop critically-informed reading practices (what they are reading may not be

individual texts but metadata of a collection or an organisation's material). The social role of the archivist in relation to the records in their care would need to be re-negotiated, or enriched.

7.4.2 Textual Criticism and Genre Theory

That there is a vocabulary and structure and tradition of textual analysis and criticism and scholarship when it comes to certain kinds of texts but not to others does not mean that the former could not be applied to the latter. For example, textual scholarship and critical analysis has long been a staple of areas of scholarship focussed on significant texts that have had a long and active history: *Beowulf*, the Bible, Shakespeare, the *Book of Invasions*, where the same text has many variations or where the same story is told differently by different people. 'Draft' and 'Final version' may be the familiar terms in business records, rather than 'edition' or 'recension,' but if anomalies and comments are important for canonical or literary texts, should drafts and comments and changes not be significant for business records also, rather than value being attributed only to the version that is published or in some way authorised, that is legally binding if acted upon? Prescott references the historian Strohm's inclusion, as "genres", not only "such literary forms as 'dream visions' and 'fabliau' but also such archival terms as 'approver's appeal' and 'petition'" (Prescott 2008, pg. 36, quoting Strohm 1998).

Foscarini proposed genre theory as a way of "enhancing" diplomatics as a method of inquiry (Foscarini 2012). Drawing on analysis by MacNeil and others, Foscarini states that the robust framework and the analytical methods of diplomatics are also the methodology's weak points. While its approach allows practitioners to "recognize abstract notions in particular instantiations" (Foscarini 2012, pg. 391), it is based on privileging the similarities between documents over their differences, and relies on

“classic’ bureaucratic contexts and ‘prototypical’ records” (Yeo 2008). Foscarini concurs with MacNeil in seeing as disadvantageous diplomatics’ focus on “the enduring and universal components of documents and acts”, since this focus is maintained at the expense of considering “the particularities and anomalies of records” (MacNeil 2004, pg. 224). Foscarini’s concern here, in seeking to “enrich” the methodology of diplomatics, is to maximise opportunities to “get closer to the full meaning of any human actions”, to ensure availability to the researcher “of the often unarticulated motives that guide human actions or the influence of factors ... which are apparently external to the formal rules governing those actions” and to allow the researcher to gain “an understanding of the relationships existing among the broader functional context generating the “text” (Foscarini 2012, pg. 391). In Foscarini’s view the application of genre theory provides such an enrichment of diplomatics as an analytical tool, and it is the social context (“implicit expectations, deep motivations, conflicting goals, and unexpressed rules” (Foscarini 2012, pg. 393)) that she seeks to safeguard thereby. An advantage of genre theory – specifically the recent developments in genre theory which reconceptualises genre as “social action” - in her view, is that, like diplomatics, it is “text-centric” and interested in the relationships, constraints and actors involved in generating the text. Similarly, it can be argued that repositioning a text, conceptually, in relation to the society that created it, can provide a way to highlight or foreground those facets of society that are neglected. The analysis under consideration in this research is more specifically focused than the outcome of analysis using genre theory; that is to say, in Foscarini’s proposal, the analysis is intended to demonstrate all of the relationships, constraints and so on that were involved in creating the text whereas here, the

specific subject under scrutiny is the liminal and the potentially marginalised facets of contemporary life.

7.4.3 Texts, Reading and Reading Against the Grain

Texts, whether fiction or non-fiction, whether written or in any other form, can be 'read' according to a variety of different theories, and the results of these 'readings' are reasonably easily identified. Some will be written specifically as an analysis by means of a particular political interest, for example a feminist re-appraisal of visual art such as *The Obstacle Race* (Greer 1979) or an analysis through queer theory in the writing of *fin-de-siècle* authors (Sedgwick 1990). Some may be indirect, or even fictional re-presentations in which a subaltern viewpoint is put forward by the narrative technique of foregrounding a previously minor character; *Wide Sargasso Sea*, which tells, from the viewpoint of the mixed-race Creole first Mrs. Rochester, the story of events preceding the story of *Jane Eyre*; is an example (Rhys 1966). The intention there is not to offer analysis but to provide a 'voice'. In the same way, there have been re-appraisals of existing collections in light of specific exclusions or minority groups: aspects of war-time life that focus on matters other than the political or military activities and concerns, collections of records related to lesbian (Chenier 2009) and gay men's (Johnston 2001) history, or black history (Paterson 2001) and so on. How might the liminal or the disregarded be drawn out by adopting a view of the archive as a text and analysing it as a literary text?

The proposal here is that in order to embed the expectation of 'the liminal' it must be possible to have a standard approach for looking for it, and not require an impetus, or a catalyst, to present itself in the context of specific situations, collections or institutions. To that end, literary theory (or theories), used to interrogate 'the archive' (at institution, collection or wider social level) as a text, is an appropriate and useful

mechanism to facilitate the location of the liminal aspects of a contemporary society (whether embodied in the absence of records of a certain type, of certain types of people or of certain activities) in the recorded traces of that society.

Literary theory is not, of course, a philosophy in itself. However, to recommend the 'raw' philosophy as it were, as a means of identifying 'the other' presupposes that information curators will all be of a philosophical turn of mind, with the required amount of time to grasp, and in some way operationalise, philosophies that will be complex and comprehensive. That assumption could not be made, as philosophy would need to become a standard part of background and training for information curators, which is unlikely, in practical terms, to be feasible, given that these are entire fields of study in themselves.

7.4.4 Reading 'against the grain'

How will literary theories assist in finding the liminal? By structuring analysis of records so that opposites, contraries, counter-positions can be 'read' or identified as absent. By drawing attention to the way in which the status of the formal or official record is identified as such (in addition to any steps in a process that gives it that status, such as approval or publication) it may make it easier to make value judgements about a record while consciously ignoring the rhetorical style.

In her reflection on the process by which information curators analyse records, Meehan outlines the elements that will be used to identify external relationships, as well as elements such as dates, existing organisation and record types that will be used to identify relationships within a collection to demonstrate this contextual information being used to "trace the complicated contours of creatorship" and these facts necessarily being "always only partial and therefore incomplete" (Meehan 2009, pg. 82).

Meehan describes cross-examining the records (drawing on Bloch's descriptions of interrogation of sources by historians, Bloch 1953) and lists seven questions that will be 'business as usual' for most archivists, though in fact, without the answers to the same questions, records managers would be unable successfully to devise schedules or frameworks for managing an organisation's records. On the basis of these questions, and working within "a particular interpretive framework" the information curator will use inference to transform the body of records "into a meaningful ...whole...organised and represented in a finding aid" (Meehan 2009 pg. 84) Meehan describes this whole as "imaginary", presumably in reference to the ambiguity as to whether the curator is creating or reflecting the relationships depicted.

7.5 The Record and Literature

Many curators have shared their views on the archives of literary people, and on the implications of processing such material. Only a handful have reflected on the literary nature of records, or have sought to enrich perception or understanding of records and their curation in light of literary innovations or styles (even though archives and records are a significant presence in a wide range of literary genres, from gothic works such as *Dracula* (Stoker 1897) or *The Moonstone* (Collins 1868) through many of the ghost stories of M.R. James (1862–1936) to literary fiction like Banville's *The Book of Evidence* (1989) or metafictional novels like *The Name of the Rose* (1980) or *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), where a context is created to describe the records on which the narrative being told was found).

In her overview of archives in the context of society as a whole, Tyacke mentions that the many other areas which the idea of the archives is permeating includes

“especially” literary criticism (Tyacke 2001). However, the real value in relating the record with literary works is less for the sake of any individual text, or even the texts created by an organisation, individual or institution, but rather the value of interpreting them in line with particular literary theories, for example, intertextuality. By this means it is arguably possible to use the relationships between texts of a contemporary society to show important patterns of inclusion and exclusion, in the same way that an artist will use the ‘negative space’ to help produce the ‘positive’ image.

For example, Meehan draws attention to a particular characteristic of the archival process: speculation (Meehan 2009). Following Eastwood’s argument that archival arrangement is “essentially a process of identifying relationships” (Eastwood 2000), Meehan’s view is that in addition to identifying the component parts of the collection, the curator is identifying (and arguably creating) “the relationships that place the records as a whole in their specific socio-cultural, administrative and provenancial contexts” (Meehan 2009, pg. 75). Meehan uses as a model the factors of significance in relation to how scholars investigate the past: the historic standpoint of one who is functioning at several removes from the creation, maintenance, transmission and use of the records, the use of evidence and the role of inference (Meehan 2009 pg. 76 quoting Schum 2003). In order to understand the contexts that gave rise to the records, the curator must infer the contexts and relationships by analysing the records and other resources, they must “read/deconstruct record/texts as much for their context/discourse as their content/information” (Heald 1996 pg. 93). Meehan’s concentration on speculation in the way in which the curator works with the records for which they are responsible is one possible way to insert additional meaning and value through a particular archival process. Meehan is discussing

records mainly in a business context, but it is possible to extend her examination outwards and look for relationships not just between the text and its immediate mode of production (or the business process that created it) but between the text and the society, and the other texts, that produced it. This approach means that the record has to be approached as a text, in much the same way as a literary text.

7.5.1 Definition of Text and Textuality

In literary theory, a text is interpreted as being more than a discrete or autonomous book. It is “a complex, unstable, and unpredictable site” (Castle 2007 pg. 323) where there are many relationships at play: between the reader and the author, between the author and the text and the intention behind the text, between the text and other texts, by other authors, which have influenced the text in question. These influences may be openly and explicitly acknowledged (for example, *If On A Winter's Night A Traveller* (Calvino 1979)) tells several stories in order to analyse the way stories are written). The influences or references may be implicit and hidden in the text but acknowledged by the author as intentionally placed, as with *The Name of the Rose* (Eco 1983) which has several layers of meaning depending on the reader's understanding of medieval philosophy and semiotics, or these influences may not be deliberate by the author but the result, for example, of stylistic influence or of wishing to write in but (not) to disrupt a certain genre.

7.5.2 Textuality of 'the archives'

To relate the record or 'the archives' to a text with literary characteristics or equivalences is not new. Prescott in *What are Archives?* (ed. Craven 2008), discusses at length the importance for archives and records of theories about text, and specifically links the archival with the literary text in their instability and ambiguity: “they had turned out much like literary sources – as deceptive as all texts”

(Prescott 2008, pg. 47). Brown in 'Archival Hermeneutics' advocates "textual analysis as a key ingredient in any macroappraisal formula" – one advantage being that it negates the confusion over the identity of the 'record creator' in records created across departments. However, Brown is talking of improving appraisal for records that are already routinely created in the course of a government's activities. In writing on the topic of "marginal access to the archives," Carter (2006) also recommends that archivists can 'read against the grain' in order to address the silences in archives, that is, the ways in which people and aspects of life – in his discussion, women - are excluded from archives. Cook, in explaining relativism in postmodernism states that meaning is relative to the context of the creation of the record, and that "behind the text there are many other texts being concealed" (Cook 2001 pg. 28).

Evans takes exception to the application of postmodernist ideas on text to history to "such an extent that the events which the records are themselves denied" (Tyacke 2001, pg. 17). This is a necessary caution; similarly it is one thing to propose that events, including contemporary ones, such as the Syrian civil war, are experienced by the majority of people through the media, but quite a different thing to claim that these events do not exist outside of their media representation. Proposing the archives as a text is to foreground the fact that text is open to interpretation due to the fact that the reader is not a neutral entity.

It also is important to draw attention to a phrase Tyacke uses in her summary of the result of the postmodernist view that "everything we think we know is textual" (Tyacke 2001, pg. 17), which is that "the author's meaning or intention is just one meaning among many and those other readings may in principle be as equally valid as the author's or anyone else's" (Tyacke 2001, pg. 17). Most events commonly

agreed to have happened leave evidence in more than one place, so readings of texts dealing with events may be open to interpretation but the interpretations are in turn open to critical assessment. Tyacke accords to archivists the responsibility for “tak[ing] issue with those who subvert or argue against the evidence of the record...or make up stories” (Tyacke 2001, pg. 23). This would be difficult to do comprehensively, for every user of records, and difficult to do with regard to modern records still in use, and where the curator contradicting the results of use of the records may need to be prepared to be embroiled in internal politics. Tyacke’s example, the failure of a Hollywood film to credit the British with the capture of the Enigma machine, is hardly really significant since films, in which a great deal of money has been invested in the expectation of profits, are notorious for this disregard for historical accuracy. Historical advisors may wish to protect their reputation in such cases (a Harvard classicist requested the removal of her name as advisor from the credits of the film *Gladiator*, (Coleman 1999)), but the curator hardly need react. For high-profile misuse on the other hand, where there was significant or controversial misleading of the public (e.g., Holocaust denial), then the curator of the records may need to respond.

In most analyses of texts using literary criticism, the focus is on an individual text (or the texts of a particular author). While some information curators may be able process records in such a way that individual items can be analysed, given the increased volume of records to which many articles refer, this opportunity is less likely to be available to curators, even those working specifically in archival environments. Curators responsible for the management of records while they are still in business use are similarly unlikely to be able to analyse records on an individual basis. This is not in itself a barrier to applying literary theory to information

curation, since the curator will be taking decisions and producing documents regarding contextualisation, retention and appraisal, whether for individual items or for series of records, and a theoretical element can be introduced into these processes at any level.

Recognising that records are a particular instance of text and ones that have a unique relationship with the events and the context of events that created them is not the same as fetishising them; to recognise the particular status of the records arising from and remaining of the administration of a war as opposed to a text written about the war is not the same as believing that nothing happened without leaving a record that was then retained by the archives.

In stating that “[r]eading, as a metaphor, could potentially say much about the nature of archival analysis in arrangement and description” Meehan accepts Heald’s point about curators reading for context but points out that Heald “glosses over the particular nature of those interactions” (Meehan 2009, pg. 80), i.e., the interactions between the curator and the record. In seeking to find a way in which information curators can enrich the archives of their contemporary society, attention is drawn here to just one aspect of the relationships that Meehan states curators will identify or create: the socio-cultural context in which records were created.

Records share another characteristic of textuality: the use of rhetoric. Even business records are not always unambiguous statements of fact, and arguably even when the record arises out of a business transaction or through an automated procedure there may be rhetoric underlying the nature of the transaction or the design of the procedure. What is written in the text is not simply ‘the way things were’ but is often written to give a certain impression or to be effective in persuasion. This might be to persuade to a certain point of view or course of action (a prosaic business example

is reports providing recommendations for options for actions on a particular issue or may be written in a particular way in order to persuade the audience that the writer is of a certain level of ability or expertise, or familiarity with the environment, and so on. Within a business environment rhetoric may be borrowed from external environments either with which the business wishes to or is required to align itself – for example, echoing phrases or concepts from purveyors of business models that are, or will be, deployed within the business, or phrases and concepts from government policies with which the organisation must align itself.

It is arguably also true where individuals write documents (such as retention schedules) under the influence of guidance from peers, either directly through advice, through the use of guidance available in standards, or through reading other documents on similar topics.

Focusing on the relationship between the curator and the record removes a limitation, that of needing the curator to be politically or philosophically responsive to a particular group. Instead, this new focus invites, or expects, the curator to be politically and philosophically responsive to the record, and the collection (whether a deliberate or *de facto* collection), for which the curator is responsible.

This relationship between curator and record may be a point at which attention can be directed towards the presence or absence of the liminal. Besides the possibilities of acting to offset the unintentional bias of the archives, and applying particular ideas, either philosophical or practical, from other professions, some curators reflecting on the matter have focused instead on the interaction between the curator and the record as the location for meaningful action. If the concept of the shared authorship of records is also drawn in, and records are seen as products of the society which produced them – including contemporary society – then, to paraphrase

Meehan, the curator can identify the relationships that demonstrate the socio-cultural context in which they were created (Meehan 2009, pg. 75).

By reading the records, like (with variations) a literary text 'against the grain', there is the possibility of seeing presences or, importantly, absences on small or larger scales. This may be possible not only within an archival collection but with more active records. Meehan notes that the reason for interrogating the records for context as well as content – there being one or more removes between the curator and the creation of the records – is applicable to the archivist more than to the records manager. However records managers, though they will be working in the environment in which the records are being created, will need, if seeking the liminal or the biased, to understand the broader relationships between the organisation and the wider social context. They may also need to understand relationships not so readily reflected in the records, e.g., between staff and management during, for example, re-structuring that leads to job loss or re-definition of job descriptions.

It is true that records managers will be among those information curators whose responsibilities will, at least in part, be more closely tied to the arena of creation, use and so on of the records for which they have responsibility. But there may also be aspects of their work that require them to engage with the records outside of the business processes through which the records are going. It is also arguable that a records or information manager will very often not be fully aware of all of the contexts that have influenced the creation, content or use of records, either because the records refer to very specialist activities not accessible to a lay-person, or because the manager is not at a hierarchical level high enough to be involved in meetings with very senior management and therefore will have only a partial or generic

familiarity with “the events that comprise the various context of the records” (Meehan 2009 pg. 78)

7.5.3 Records as genres

MacNeil (2012) proposes that genre theory can be used successfully to identify the social functions performed by archival finding aids, and her research arose from the emerging recognition within the professional literature of the ‘generic’ nature of finding aids; for example, that finding aids had socio-cultural functions and rhetorical dimensions. The concept of socio-cultural functions is, in the influential view of Miller, fundamental to the definition of genre: genre is “typified rhetorical actions based on recurring situations” (Miller 1994, pg. 31). The important characteristic of the definition is that it focuses on what action a particular form of discourse is intended to achieve. This idea – of genre being a response to or engagement with a situation – was developed further by Devitt as being, instead of a response, rather a “reciprocal dynamic between an individual’s actions and a socially defined context” (Devitt 2004, pg. 31). The contexts identified by Devitt as being part of the definition of genre are, arguably, to be found in the non-literary texts retained in archives, used in business and other administrative or bureaucratic procedures and created by information curators, both in descriptive documents such as finding aids, as in MacNeil’s example, but also in more structural documents such as policies and retention schedules. The contexts indicated by Devitt are situational, cultural and generic. The first refers to the and purposes of and the people involved in every action, the second refers to “material contexts and learned behaviors, values, beliefs, and templates [that] influence how situation is constructed” and the third to “the already existing textual classifications and forms already established and being established within a given culture, the set of typified rhetorical actions already constructed by

participants in a society” (Devitt, 2004, pp 25, 27-28). The “given culture” and the “society” Devitt refers to can be replicated in microcosm within the profession. In this interpretation, the recurring situational context will be the professional duties – whether to facilitate readers or develop a policy and retention schedule – to which the information curator will respond primarily or partially through creating a document. The material and behaviour, the values, beliefs and templates “that influence how the situation is constructed” will derive from training and experience, from the explicit and implicit culture of the organisation or institution in which the curator is practising, and through sharing of advice and examples of specific documentation (e.g., policies) between fellow-professionals.

The generic context is in essence the professional mores of the time, expressed through training, interaction with fellow-professionals and through the professional literature. This understanding of genre is as an essentially social or interactive phenomenon, and the concept of a “discourse community” has been re-examined since it was first discussed (Swales, 1990). In the context of records, often even where they arise from business activities and are not discursive, the “discourse community”, that is, a social group that interacts with and through the texts used to “communicate its aims and promote its values”, could refer to the curators responsible for curating the resulting records (MacNeil 2012, pg. 492). It is a concept that can almost certainly refer to those who create the documents also, since organisations and institutions will work within guidelines, legal frameworks and standards, and there are expected narratives and vocabularies within more discursive or narrative documents (policies, statements, procedures, directives) that influence how documents are written (Giltrow 2002). “As social structures that are interpreted and enacted through individuals’ “ongoing communicative practices”

(Orlikowski and Yates 1994), typical organisational genres such as memos, letters, meetings, expense forms, and reports both enable and constrain the types of interactions the members of a given community can engage in and, by doing so, contribute to building the community's identity. The analysis of "genres in action" may therefore shed light on the deep structures that form the "culture" of an organisation, "by revealing otherwise invisible power relations, shared ideologies, competing goals, and any unwritten rules, which de facto define how business is carried out within that specific workplace" (Foscarini 2012, pg. 395).

7.5.4 Business record genre

Brothman refers in passing to the "long-standing division of labor" between archivists and records managers" which differentiates between people with special skills to manage records as an administrative business support function (corporate legal and business intelligence asset) and people who manage records to help fulfil the longer-range social function and culture-making roles of private and public institutions (cultural asset)" (Brothman, 2001, pg. 53). To remove the fillip of "longer-range social function and culture-making roles" from records management in a business environment is to make that activity sterile and arguably potentially more compromised, as well as implying that business and culture are not related to each other.

However, there is comparatively little in the professional literature about the rhetoric of business documents. Therefore it is difficult to give examples other than those based on personal experience, of seeing words begin to be used in business communications (e.g., vocabulary at management level changes to reflect management theory, say that staff have been 'challenged' rather than asked or told to perform a certain task, or using the term 'fungibility', more usually used in the

context of currency exchange, with reference to staff members having skills that can be of equal value in different places in the same organisation) and drawing personal conclusions about the implications of changes in vocabulary. There is arguably a distancing and fictionalising element to business or formal documents, as Banting said of literary ones: "this heightened...literariness" in private collections arises, Banting says, with the use of initials instead of people's names whereas in business records, it is the position or job title that is of significance rather than the individual qua individual (Banting, 1986, pg. 120-122).

Equally, one's personal experience might be that certain business documents, such as policies, contain rhetoric rather than statements of fact, and that this can be supported as a proposal by comparisons; policy statements made by organisations about the value of good information management may not be reflected in the budgeting documents. The policy statement is a statement of intent, but it is also a document through which an organisation communicates certain things to its peers, for example about its awareness of emerging issues (such as an acknowledgement of the value of information as an asset) and its awareness of and respect for standards. A policy document on a particular issue, such as the management of information assets, is not a statement of fact, and needs to be seen in the context of other records – such as those that demonstrate priorities within a full programme of work, and budgeting records – before facts can be determined. While analysis of business records in terms of rhetoric and genre is not common it is not unknown, and business documents share the necessary characteristics as indicated by Bazerman. Bazerman (2012) notes that a document is understood not only as an "integrated whole" that conveys meaning in itself but is understood also as being an

instance of a genre that conveys “anticipatable kinds of meaning within recognizable social actions” (pg. 385).

Similarly, on e-mail listservs, peer groups and through the papers given at professional conferences, there is a great deal of intertextuality in how professionals perform their work, as advice and discussion is sought and given on many practical operations, such as developing a retention schedule, automating records-related processes and choosing or implementing records management software. On that basis, it seems probable that a case could be made for business records as a literary genre, but with little literature available at the moment, such an argument would not be possible to sustain without a dedicated research project. Paré and Smart (1994) proposed a definition of genre based on “distinctive regularities across four dimensions: textual features, composing processes, reading practices, and social roles (of writers and readers)” (MacNeil 2012, pg. 493); these are the four dimensions used to analyse finding aids as a genre and a similar approach might be successful for business records.

It is still, arguably, possible for a records manager to encourage, if not ensure, the retention of records that are evidence of an ‘other’ version of a business, institution or organisation. This should not carry with it any sinister implication; the ‘other’ will not necessarily reflect badly on the more public or polished version of the business, nor is it necessarily revealing something about the business that its leaders or representatives would prefer kept hidden. This ‘other’ version is the practical implementation, and the resulting lived experience, of the ‘narrative’ of the business’ administration and operation, the performance of the business’ theory of what is its function and how it carries out that function.

Naturally, and especially in a business environment, it will not be possible to have a complete record of this 'other' version, as individual people are not acting in their private capacity and so may be disinclined to record their views, habits or experiences, for fear of a negative impact on their employment or future career. So for example, an organisation may officially adhere to a particular mechanism for running a project (e.g., the PRINCE II or similar methodology) but the decision-making processes and means of communication or persuasion may be peculiar to the individual organisation, or distinguished by the personal and working relationships between the members involved in the project. In organisations that are subject to information legislation related to Freedom of Information or protection of personal information, staff may not want their non-official records kept or curated for fear that they may be made public at some future point. All of these are potential limitations on what might be retained, as staff are made aware of the provisions of legislation and of the fact that information recorded casually might be disclosed publicly under certain circumstances. On the other hand, these risks are quite often already being taken by organisations and the individuals within them. This is the case where the organisation either does not manage its information, or else does so in a limited manner, by identifying certain series of records that are important enough to be managed and need to be retained (e.g., records arising from the performance of whatever is the organisation's primary activity, familiar core activities such as recruitment or finance) but neglecting everything else. Records outside of the series identified as arising from core or important routine procedures need to have some other value associated with it meaning that it is worth retaining (or that there is risk associated in not retaining it). Unless the organisation is behaving in an opprobrious manner in some way, the probability is that these records would be harmlessly

retained, and could be incorporated into the organisation's archives. The records manager can encourage the retention of uncompleted documents, such as drafts, or of 'failures', the records of abandoned projects. In doing so, a curator, even when engaging with the record in a business context rather than an archival one, can perform the kind of "destruction of totality" that Banting describes, by "unconcealing" the ratio of writing (drafts, revisions, comments etc.) to the published or approved version and thereby "a polyphonic textuality substitutes for the monological voice of the traditionally singular author" (Banting, 1989, pg. 112). Poster (1995) argued that databases are a discourse, a form of writing because they "effect a constitution of the subject" (that is, the individual, by choosing what to include and how to describe it) (quoted in Andersen 2002, pg. 473). Andersen also states that there is discourse in secondary literature (that is, literature that registers and describes knowledge for retrieval so in archival/records management terms, finding aids including classification schemes) and that this discourse is largely expressed "by the organisation of the knowledge taking place within it" and thus "access points also have a discursive and rhetorical role" (Andersen 2002, pg. 473). Wilson (1968) analyses what it means that a document is in one place rather than another in a bibliographic instrument such as a catalogue. Myers (1991) analyses review literature specifically in light of whether or not the review writer has an agenda other than providing an overview of the literature in question. Andersen notes that scholars (his examples are mainly from scientific scholars) are expected to use "a particular rhetoric and express through [sic] an appropriate discourse using an appropriate genre." Andersen writes of the "divisions of labour" of primary, secondary and tertiary literature in scholarly communication (Andersen 2007, pg. 471). Banting's reflection on the relationship between the text and the curator is mentioned above in Section

999 and she outlines the form in which the curator had contextualised the collection in question. There is a “detailed description” for this collection, the papers of the writer Dorothy Livesay, a container list, an “exhaustive” index, two appendices and eight extensive essays on the collection by the archivists. It is a certainty that this level of processing of a collection is beyond the means of a great many archivists. At the same time, in a way the proposal for using literary criticism as a means of disrupting the narrative of records has the virtue of at least demanding only that the curator recognizes the textual nature of the record: that it has been created for a purpose, and that that purpose is not a “simple” reality but a complex construction. A curator that does not have the resource to go into that kind of detail may not have the resource to engage with the margins at all. But curators who are prepared, professionally, to bring philosophy and critical faculty to their engagement with the record will be prepared to take advantage of whatever opportunity might come their way: all that is required of them is that they have a complex understanding of texts and how they work. This is not an unreasonable expectation of a profession that is focused on text (rather than on material object), and it does not limit the practitioner to adhering to any particular philosophy, any particular political opinion, or to curate a particular type of record.

7.6 Specific aspects of Literary Criticism: Bakhtin, Intertextuality and carnival

As has been mentioned in Chapter 3, the philosopher most frequently cited directly in relation to the reassessment of archival theory was Derrida, and less frequently there were mentions of other philosophers for example, de Certeau or Lyotard. Since the approach being proposed is that of a focus on the text *qua* text, and since what is being sought is the marginal, the *other* and the constant counter-narrative, a valuable philosophical framework for analysing the text is arguably that of *carnival*,

the brain-child of Bakhtin. Although is not a name that appears anywhere in the literature or the data, Bakhtin's ideas were very influential in the early days of the development of literary critical theory, and his work on Dostoyevsky, when translated first into French and then into English, underpinned later work on literary theory and the development of intertextuality and this latter approach is, like the carnival, arguably of value as a means for approaching the record. In the foreword to the English translation of *Rabelais and his World*, Pomorska (1984) described Bakhtin at the time that his works were translated into French as "mystery even in his native Russia," his biography subject to "discovery" and "reconstruction", and his works up to the late 1960s "neglected or unknown." While these may not be signs of an orthodox career for an academic philosopher, they are perhaps not inappropriate characteristics for a philosopher whose ideas might inform approaches to the marginal, the liminal and the disregarded.

7.6.1 Bakhtin

Mikhail Bakhtin (1895–1975) was a Russian philosopher, literary critic and semiotician, whose academic and publishing career was interrupted or disrupted by political circumstances, including being sent into exile in Kazakhstan by Stalin and by the German invasion during the Second World War. He developed a number of highly influential theories which influenced other philosophical areas. In his analysis of the works of Dostoyevsky (1821-1881), Bakhtin developed his idea of dialogism, that is, that many works of literature carry on dialogues with other works of literature and their authors. In Bakhtin's view, the dialogue was genuinely two-way; a current work was informed by a previous work, but a previous work was altered, or understood differently, as a result of this dialogue. Bakhtin's theory of dialogism influenced writers such as T.S. Eliot (1888–1965) but was also heavily influential in

the development of ideas about intertextuality, once Bakhtin's work became available in languages other than Russian in the 1970s. Bakhtin's dynamic interpretation of the relationship between texts also extended to his idea that individual people could never be finalised – that everyone was subject to change, everyone is influenced by and influences other people, and so no voice can be said to be isolated. This question of voices, and the way in which people presented themselves and were understood in the world, how they understood others, was at the root of his concept of how objective truth could be reached and he used Dostoyevsky's writing as an example of this kind of polyphony. Bakhtin's point about polyphony and truth was that if two people were in disagreement, it was wrong to assume that one of them must be in error – "Truth needs a multitude of carrying voices." In introducing Bakhtin's writing on *The Dialogic Imagination*, Holmquist draws attention to the focus of Bakhtin's work on disorder versus order, a sense of "opposition and struggle at the heart of existence"; Holmquist says Bakhtin has "an almost Manichean sense" of this "Zoroastrian clash" between "the centrifugal forces that strive to keep things apart, and the centripetal forces that strive to make things cohere" (Holmquist 1981:xviii). While Bakhtin's vision is expressed in terms of an on-going conflict that is more confrontational than the pluralistic interpretation of diversity in the context of records, his central awareness of the polyphonic nature of truth is relevant. Bakhtin described as a "chronotype" the kind of information available in a genre at a particular time

Intertextuality is a concept in literary criticism in which texts are not seen as single productions but as the result of referencing several other texts, and potentially the product of more than one author. As with many complex and revolutionary ideas, there may be more than one claimant to the title of 'inventor' of the concept of

intertextuality. The first to use the term was Kristeva, in a number of her works published during the 1960s, particularly 'The Bounded Text' and 'Word, Dialogue, Novel'. However, her work was influenced heavily by that of Bakhtin, which was translated into French, and published for the first time, in 1965. The concept of intertextuality was itself significantly informed by linguistics: Bakhtin was primarily a linguist, and intertextuality, as it was developed by Kristeva and others, also drew on the works of Saussure. In terms of linguistics, words available to an author already belong to a system of signs without which the word had no meaning; in addition to this existing network of meaning, many linguists also argued that authors were, similarly, working with an existing literary system from which they selected plots, narrative styles. This related the work of the author not only to the existing networks of meaning but also other texts that have chosen similar plots, narratives and so on (Allen 2000, pg. 11-12). Intertextuality was the fundamental concept in Barthes' 'The Death of the Author': "[t]he text is a tissue of quotations drawn from innumerable centres of culture" (Barthes 1977 pg. 146-147). In an approach that was different to Saussure's, Bakhtin was concerned with the social settings and contexts in which language was used and words exchanged, the utterance in opposition to language, the "social specificity of language" rather than the formal structure that Saussure proposed (Allen 2000 pg18). Bakhtin also proposed that all utterances (i.e., all uses of language, written or spoken, in specific social instances) were dialogic, "their meaning and logic dependent upon what has previously been said and on how they will be received by others" (Allen 2000, pg. 19)

7.6.2 Carnival

One of Bakhtin's best-known concepts, along with heteroglossia and dialogism, was that of carnival, or the carnivalesque, which he developed in his analysis of the French author Rabelais. One of the most important features of carnival in Bakhtin's analysis was the reversal of rank and of 'normal' structures: "It creates the chance for a new perspective and a new order of things, by showing the relative nature of all that exists" (Robinson 2011, no page numbers).

There are other characteristics of the carnivalesque, in Bakhtin's analysis, that would be more difficult, at least, to embody in an archives, such as the importance of excess and the grotesque, or the transgression of 'self' by the use of masks. However, the idea of the carnival was a means of deconstructing the existing power relationships in society, a way of experiencing an alternative, or other, life influenced by an ideology that is the opposite of the currently dominant one, however briefly. The performance of a carnival is not in itself an instrument for overturning these hierarchies but a means of expression, where the relative and contingent nature of formal networks and hierarchies is articulated or demonstrated. Carnival introduces playfulness and inversion into engagement with everyday life and with 'normal' life. Carnival is a performance of anarchy "not anarchy itself": it opposes ideas of fixity (of natural order or of social hierarchies) and it mocks them but it does not overthrow them (Robinson 2011).

In his summary of carnival, Robinson describes it as a "type of speech-genre" and characterises it as a moment "where anything...is possible", that occurs "on the border between art and life", and is "is usually marked by displays of excess and grotesqueness." It is a communal performance "with no boundary between performers and audience" and – most relevant here – "it creates a situation in which

diverse voices are heard and interact...enabling genuine dialogue.” In Robinson’s analysis there are characteristics of carnival in Bakhtin’s conception, such as the focus on embodiment, the enactment of “utopian freedom” or on festivity, that are less relevant here than others. The significant aspect of carnival is that of inversion, of creating a space in which the transience (and by implication, the constructedness) of dominant ideology is recognised, and in which that which is privileged and that which is banal and unimportant are reversed. What is important is the possibility that an opportunity to resist “subsumption in the dominant ideology” is made available. Robinson acknowledges that this is expressive rather than instrumental and also that transgression and the resistance of authority is not necessarily in itself positive, as it can be an expression of ideologies (e.g., racism) that are repressed by systems that are (at least officially) non-racist (Robinson 2011). In writing about the importance of spectacles and rituals as cultural communicators, Bastian uses the example of the Play Mas carnival in the US Virgin Islands, as discussed in Chapter 5. In essence, the only way of including the carnival in the archives is to include documents about the carnival but the concept of the carnival can be borrowed in this other way. “The naming of silence subverts it” (Carter 2006, pg. 222); by foregrounding it, drawing attention to the existence of the absence and the silence. To adapt Sontag’s statement that “Silence never ceases to imply its opposite” (Sontag 1979, pg. 11) then the same may be true of that which is present in the archival record: it never ceases to imply that which is absent from it.

The feature of carnival, therefore, that seems to be most valuable here, is not the grotesque, the material or the festive, but the transgressive, the opportunity to conceptualise the world and its dominant narratives (as reflected in a particular collection or system of records) in reverse. Indeed, carnival does not invoke purely

the inversion of everyday contemporary norms, but the very fact of change and becoming (though of course, the dissolution of boundaries between self and the 'other', and the moments of becoming rather than of being are core to horror and Gothic literature (Kristeva 1980; Beville 2009)). Bakhtin focused on the value of carnival and carnival laughter in Rabelais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel* in achieving what he states is the basic goal of Rabelais' writing: "to destroy the official picture of events" (Bakhtin 1982, pg. 439). It would not be quite correct to say that the aim of information curators should be to destroy the official picture, as their responsibility lies with the official record as well as the unofficial, but it is justifiable to say that there is value in curators seeking to provide the means to disrupt, dispute, destroy or diversify the official narrative.

Bakhtin's original ideas were developed in relation specifically to two authors, Dostoyevsky and Rabelais, and his analysis of the latter, in which he introduced his ideas about carnival, is "inexplicable without reference to the close connection between the circumstances of its production and Soviet intellectual and political history" (Holmquist 1987 pg. xv). Nonetheless Bakhtin created a text that has relevance beyond the historical place and time of its production, a text that facilitates the interpretation of other texts, and of the society that produces them. Bakhtin identifies three aspects of carnival: ritual spectacle, oral or written parodies and "genres of billingsgate"- curses, oaths, disruptive and vulgar language that challenged official and "serious" language (Bakhtin 1989, 5, 16-17).

Not all of Bakhtin's ideas related to his analysis of carnival are – obviously at least – relevant to the archives. He placed a strong emphasis on the importance and role of laughter (physical laughter, satire, mockery), especially in the context of irreverence or mockery being a form of social safety valve. Bakhtin quotes an (unattributed)

fifteenth-century manuscript defending 'feast of fools' celebrations by stating that "we permit folly on certain days so that we may later return with greater zeal to the service of God" (Bakhtin 1965, pg. 75). However, attempting to redress a bias in the archives is not necessarily a mechanism for ensuring greater adherence to the dominant ideological structure; indeed the reverse may be the case (and Holmquist points out that carnival or carnivalesque events could become politicised; during historical periods of political unrest, certain festivals have been banned as their potential as a political opportunity was recognised). Bakhtin's characterisation of carnival is based on largely unreferenced and sometimes sweeping statements about medieval carnival, for example that its character of "joyful and triumphant hilarity" became "cold humour" during the Renaissance (Bakhtin 1965, pg. 38). But while some of Bakhtin's views on carnival in particular can be sweeping and transhistorical, and his vision of the general populace utopian, the value of his view is the connection he proposed between text and carnival (and by implication, with inversion, the unofficial, the punishable), his identification of text and of language as a site of carnival. Theoretically carnival can be applied to any set of structures and representations because to perform carnival in this Bakhtinian, or Rabelaisian, sense a fundamental question will have to be asked: what could be, if that which we know to be, was not? Responses to this question need not be embodied, they can be analytical and textual. It can be developed as a means for always seeking the alternative to what is formally represented. It can be used also as a means for seeking the alternative within what is presented as the alternative or other. Chapter 4 noted ways in which marginalised or subaltern groups, of which colonised races or Irish Travellers, are two from many examples, can themselves contain doubly-

marginalised, doubly-silenced individuals, such as women, or gays within these two examples.

That Bakhtin's writing on dialogism and carnival, while tied to the political environment in which he worked, can also have relevance to other times and places, Holmquist attributes to the fact that Bakhtin was aware that his was a time when social and political certainties were overthrown, and that fact has, or should have, resonance for information curators. Society is always changing and revolutions are not always declared, or the result of high-profile political activity; the transformation of significant areas of society may be the result of a domestic and incremental change (such as changes in domestic or agricultural technology) rather than a violent conflict. An expectation, or professional requirement that information curators interpret 'against the grain' will mean that all professionals would be expected to some degree at least to manifest "hospitality to 'otherness'" (Harris 2002 pg. 23) and the generic concept of liminality will mean that the professional is not obliged personally hold a particular type of political view (i.e., liberal, conservative, etc.) nor do they need to have a political interest in any group (i.e., they do not need to be feminists, interested in race etc.).

This is an analytical framework in a way, but it may be better described as a "sensitizing concept" (Jonker 2009 pg. 72). According to sociologist Herbert Blumer, concepts in sociological theory were unstable as to definition, and therefore had to be able to adapt to different times and circumstances. Using the idea of a "sensitizing concept", Jonker proposes that an "us and them" dichotomy could be implemented as such a mechanism in order to help archivists make acquisition choices in a way that would maximise the relevance of the records preserved to the important issues of the day. The dichotomy would draw attention to conflict in

contemporary society, because it reflected “the changing balances between the established and the outsider”, and thereby could guide the archivist “to identify key issues in contemporary society” (Jonker 2009 pg. 73). The focus would be on people, on identifying “the ways in which they are socially included or excluded” and then discover “which institutions and other record creators ...reflect or highlight the actual existence of them and us dichotomies.” A valuable element here is the idea Jonker uses of “sensitizing concept”. Her approach returns the focus to the people, rather than – as in this research – to the text and depends on there being an existing awareness and articulation of a social status of included or excluded. It also depends on there being some level – even a very low one – of conflict. What is required for drawing attention to liminality and to a constant presence of the “other” is a sensitising concept that does not require conflict in order to identify what it seeks, and which is not required to “identify key issues” in society or to actively guide a researcher as to “what problems to look at and what questions to ask (Jonker 2009, pg. 73).

This is a partial adaptation of Bakhtin’s concept of the carnival and does not refer to, or propose to adopt, the elements of the grotesque or the importance of the material body in carnival. It may be that these elements can be appropriated. To approach a text in a deconstructive mode, and to create the intellectual conceptual space in which to look for opposites, the excluded and the ‘other’ is sufficient disruption and search for transgression. To celebrate these things requires a particular interaction or reaction on behalf of the curator which – for the purposes of trying to make this engagement an embedded requirement – should not be prescribed. Brothman (1991) differentiates between order and disorder based on whether or not the item in question was in its ‘proper’ place and whether it had continued meaning). What this

thesis is proposing is that a legitimate response to concern about exclusion and about preserving a record of contemporary society that is more incomplete and more biased than could be managed is to find different recipients of meaning, to seek ways of seeing or proposing the meaning or significance of items whose original use is completed and which have not yet found “a new, meaningful space in the order of the world” (Brothman 1991 pg. 80). The exact ways which an information curator could find to be deconstructive in processing records would vary from organisation to organisation. In an organisation that tightly controlled its records, a deconstruction of the records may only be possible through documenting the decision-making processes that surrounded the creation of documents like classification schemes or retention schedules, which demonstrate what is valued and what is dismissed. A different kind of organisation may be able or willing to retain more social records. These might straightforwardly be records of work-based social events, but could be the responses (positive or negative) from the staff to decisions taken or to events. The retention of informal records would not be as straightforward a matter as there would be questions of ownership, liability, confidentiality and so on, but these matters obtain also in many other instances of responses to marginality.

7.6.3 Intertextuality and Shared Authorship

Intertextuality is not a new proposal in relation to curated records. Shared or extended authorship has been previously discussed as the source of records and of records collections; arguably this idea can itself be extended beyond any particular group, and to include everyone living in a particular regime.

In writing of the records created by the colonial administration of the Virgin Islands, Bastian refers to the dynamic dialogue between coloniser and colonised which creates a record / the coloniser describes or shapes the indigenous population in the

records it creates and the indigenous people respond and assert in opposition. As discussed above, other authors unpick this overall engagement in more detail, to demonstrate more active authorship by the colonised of the records about them. Ketelaar also discusses the importance of this shared authorship, stating that “memory texts do not speak for themselves,” in the sense that often a person will use a means of mediation in order to perform an act of recalling (in Ketelaar’s example, recalling the name of a book). It is (probably) also the case that records, or the ‘voices’ in records cannot speak for themselves, since the reader, or user of the archives, is part of the mediation of the content. Similarly, Brothman has written that a record’s creation could not be conceptualised as being limited to “an original context or singular creative moment” and he uses the helical model as an alternative to the sequential life-cycle model (Brothman, 2006 pg. 260). Prescott observes that “[r]ecords are shaped by countless textual precedents” and that “[a] text is a cultural construct of the most complex kind”, and quotes the historian Galbraith’s statement that “[r]ecords, no less than the literary sources, are generally compiled from other documents, often unknown to us” (Prescott 2008 pp 40 and 47).

Several of the proposals focused on post-custodial engagement with records are predicated on a more sophisticated understanding of the ‘communal origin’ of records and this is a slightly different element, not present elsewhere. The impetus is, in a way, to respond to a particular understanding of the record as a text, not a response to the subject of the text.

This is an approach that arguably demands a response regardless of the subject; it implies that all records should be understood as having this communal origin, regardless of any other characteristic about them. Within the literature most oral history collections are a response to a concern about the absence of certain people

who were actors in a particular working or social environment (a hospital, during wartime) or with the loss of particular classes of information not recorded elsewhere (like folklore). Similarly, community archives respond to communities of people who may be under-represented in the official record. This is not a hard-and-fast division as the impetus for some oral history or community archives initiatives comes from a recognition of the limitations of many formal records, and the ways in which the characteristics of records can be applied to non-textual, non-permanent subjects such as performance. But as a general statement, the focus on a characteristic of the record as a text, rather than as a signifier of its subject, is a valuable one when trying to identify means of challenging and disrupting, of 'seeking the liminal.'

7.7 Summary

Bastian describes the postcolonial archives as "a metaphor for counter-narratives" (Bastian 2013, 124) and so too is the carnival in the Bakhtinian sense: it is a way of prompting the gaze to focus on the unspecified other, that may simply be a neutral alternative but may be later recognised as a counter to an as-yet unproblematised narrative. Carnival is potentially a "sensitising concept" such as Jonker (2009) proposed, and it may be a way to talk about the equivalency of "counter-hegemony" an alternative to "this all-pervasive social net [i.e., the dominant cultural hegemony] is to create forms of counter-hegemony especially among working-class activists and intellectuals (Castle, 2007, 111, summarising the ideas of Antonio Gramsci on hegemony)

Having acknowledged, in Chapter 6, the value of existing ways of engaging with bias, Chapter 7 has considered a less frequent theme found in the literature, that of focusing on foregrounding the precise nature of the engagement between the curator and the records for which they have responsibility. This theme draws away from

professionals engaging with the people who created or are the subject of records, and draws towards the relationship between the professional and the record, and the interpretation of the record in its context. The context here is extended beyond the immediate environment in which the record was created – whether in a private collection or a business or institution – into the originating society. In seeking ways to augment current practices, in Chapter 7 this research focused on proposing that techniques of literary criticism could be used by information curators as a way of finding opportunities to highlight, at least, places where bias might occur in the archives. In her opinion piece on archives and the wider cultural context, Tyacke emphasises, quite rightly, the importance of clarity about appraisal and retention decisions (Tyacke 2001, pg. 22). In some cases, of course, the decision to retain will not be the curator's to make, because there will be legislative requirements. She asks the obvious and necessary question: if a curator is compelled to choose between records to retain, what are the criteria for this choice? However, she uses, as an example of decisions to be made, the question “should we archive the records of those military personnel between the wars because the present generation would like us to do so?” (Tyacke 2001, pg. 22). In one way, the wishes of the present generation (or any putative user of a record) might seem to be a legitimate benchmark for valuing records, even if only because it is an intuitive way to assess value. On the other hand, difficulties with it are not hard to find: *who* among the present generation would like us to retain these records? And – if one is approaching appraisal and retention with the attitude that nothing is neutral – an equally if not more important question might be ‘who would *not* want us to retain these record, and why?’

If it is accepted that the issue of a biased archives is of importance to the profession, then the question remains of how engaged professionals can integrate responses to these concerns in their practice. Professionals will not be capable of engaging each in the same way, either because of personality or ability, or because the resources available to them are limiting factors. This is the same in any profession: the ethics of medical practice is an important professional area, and some doctors will join Médecins Sans Frontières but others will find more domestic or low-key ways of engaging with the topic. This is a situation similar to that of information curators. An information curator cannot be obliged to be politically engaged, and to thereby volunteer to engage – in whatever way – with a politicised group or current political issue. However, they can be obliged to engage with the text. How they do so will vary from organisation to organisation, particularly in relation to the interpretations of “the text” available to them. It may be possible only to deal with records at a class or series level, or within databases or particular applications. In this case, “the text” may refer to the totality of records in the organisation which will have (conceptual) margins of a different sort to a text that is one collection, or one item.

The suggestion in this chapter, that literary theory has value for information curation practice, is made but it must also be acknowledged that this approach may not be suitable for, nor taken up by, all information curators. The proposal is not, however, suggested as a replacement for other types of engagement, but as an additional opportunity. It is argued, in fact, that as this approach requires exclusively interaction between the curator and the record, it is an approach that may be more available to more curators, as the primary resource required is time, and the primary skill required is the ability to understand records in context. While the practising professional’s time might not be her or his own, it does not go outside professional

expectations that a practitioner will be familiar with critically analysing records. The proposal of Chapter 7 is, in essence, that this analysis occurs with the specific aim of reading between the lines for potential absences. In this way, the information curator, and the locations in which they work, have the potential not only to respond to conflict or crises but both to challenge hegemony – the fact of hegemony, rather than a specifically negative hegemonic ideology - and diversify the traces of everyday life.

This presupposes that the curator will be performing some research within and analysis of the records which they curate, and there may be disagreement regarding the suitability of this activity, as it may suggest a return to the archivist as sharing a role with historians. But if information curators are not neutral or passive actors in relation to records, to the individuals to whom the records pertain in whatever capacity, and to the society that the records reflect, then inevitably roles will be shared, whether as historian, critic or activist.

It is also arguable that this approach helps mitigate the status of “special collections”. Schwartz, in her article on photographic and other visual archives, raises objections to what she calls “linguistic othering” when it comes to identifying special collections, as she feels that terms such as “special” collection, special collections archivists and so on, have the effect of relegating such records and people “to the margins of archivy” (Schwartz 2002, pg 147). Is this a danger for the records of the non-mainstream? Is there a fundamental disadvantage, a pushing “to the edge of archivy”, to having special collections based on the “special” status of people in society? In one way, possibly, but in another, it is arguably a truer reflection of society given that all societies have their edges, their “others”, those people and lifestyles and politics that are the “them” that help to make us “us”. A more serious disadvantage, from the point of view of the reflective information curator, is the sense

that the “other” is being taken care of somewhere else, that exclusion is happening elsewhere, other than in one’s own place of employment.

Chapter 8: Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

The aim of this research was to determine if existing professional responses to marginality, as reflected in professional literature, constituted a comprehensive theoretical stance applicable to or adaptable for any instance of engagement with marginality.

The research questions were: How – explicitly or by implication – does the professional discourse represent or interpret “marginalisation”? What specific responses to marginalisation are discussed in professional literature? Is there potential for further development of professional discourse and practice in this area?

These research questions were considered to be of value in potentially extending and enriching the existing professional discourse which, as presented through the professional literature, was perceived to have some limitations and weaknesses. There is no specific legal or even professional obligation to engage with non-mainstream records, whether this term is understood to mean records of people known to be socially or politically disadvantaged (however extreme this disadvantage may be) other than “official” records arising from engagement with official bodies, or whether the term is used to refer to records usually given a low archival value. The professional literature, however, indicates a strong ethic within the profession that “the archive” (as a general term referring to the recorded history of society) should not contain only the records of official or privileged administrations or individuals (Harris 2001; Flinn 2006; Cook and Schwartz 2002; Bastian 2006, among others).

8.2 Reflection on the research questions

Chapter 1 outlines three objectives of this research, each objective focused on a particular question.

The first research question was what conceptualisation of “marginality” was presented in, or emerged from, the data. The second question was whether or not this conceptualisation could be elaborated in a way that could increase the opportunities for curators to engage with the absences in the records for which they were responsible. The third question was whether a mechanism or technique, additional to the mechanisms of response found in the data, could be proposed that would allow information curators who were not working with explicitly or obviously politicised records to identify (or at least seek) the absent margin.

The research was based on the professional material written by and for authors professionally engaged in some aspect of the management of information. The literature comprised those texts that deconstructed the existing theory, or theories, of information curation and, problematised the questions of marginality and its representation in archives and of the political nature of archives and recordkeeping. Some of these texts were from the late 1980s, but most dated from the 1990s and 2000s, this being a point when professional rhetoric was actively informed by postmodernist ideas. The data upon which the research was based led to conclusions regarding the interpretation of marginality and the margins, and the implications of the refutation of existing assumptions that the management of archives and records was a neutral activity. These texts engaged with these new ideas, whether to challenge or to support them, and which reflected the activities of individuals who sought to put them into practice. They also included texts from outside the professional literature, where external input became necessary, which is a step also taken by a number of authors within the profession.

8.3 Conceptualisation of “marginal”

The first question was formulated because existing professional discourse about the political nature of “the archives”, as reflected through the professional literature, predominantly conceptualized “the margins” as being virtually co-terminus with “politically disadvantaged” and usually implied “politicised”. This interpretation of “the margins” focuses on the archival response to or engagement with the resolution of particular disadvantages or injustices. This approach arguably has the potential weakness of encouraging professionals to assume that “margins” were the responsibility of those who had “issue-based” archives (that is to say, archives which were specifically focused on the records of, for example, particular historical or contemporary social conflicts, ethnic, sexual or other minorities and so on) rather than a more abstract professional concern. In addition, it could limit the professions’ ability to engage with non-mainstream records in advance of the politicisation of a particular group of people, or people about a particular issue; it would be the act of politicisation that would foreground the record and provoke a re-assessment of its long-term value, and thus the profession would always be reacting, not acting; always rowing, not steering (Hedstrom 1993).

The research reviewed the responses to the challenges of engagement with the margins, as presented in the literature. The aim of this was not to assess the responses in terms of their effectiveness, but in order to determine what were the conditions under which the engagement took place and with whom, as a means for drawing out the concept of marginality that was developing, whether expressed directly or indirectly. Some responses were very direct and focused on engagement with the creators or subjects of the records. In some cases (e.g., the Australian National Archives), legislation was the catalyst for the engagement though the form

thereof was not prescribed. In others (Working Mens' Club Archives), there was an existing group with which the institution could engage. Some forms of engagement on the other hand focused on the way in which the information curator acted upon the record – that is, the way in which the curator made appraisal decisions, arranged the records or described them – rather than on either the creator or the subject (Cook (2001), Meehan (2009), Hedstrom (2002) on appraisal and arrangement).

The literature – particularly in the late 1990s and early 2000s – reveals an increasingly-sophisticated articulation of the importance of the role of the record not only as administrative activity but as a mechanism for implementation of cultural and political ideologies and as reflection of the contemporary culture that created it. While continued debate about marginality or liminality in the archives may or may not enhance professionals' performance of their official duties, the debate has value where this ethic of diversity and comprehensiveness is held to be of importance. This thesis proposes that the kinds of instances and examples of marginality reflected upon by the information curation profession should not be limited to the familiar ones from situations of political instability and those articulated by politicised groups drawing attention to a particular instance of injustice in contemporary society. Rather than being a characteristic of some kind of politicised conflict, this research proposes that marginality or "otherness" should be seen as a potential characteristic or filip of every society. Opening up the conceptualization of margins and marginality to more abstract interpretation helps to perpetuate the debate, as the successful engagement of the profession with a particular minority does not bring with it any implication of closure. The research also found that the response to the challenges to long-standing mainstream concepts within professional theory brought by this new discourse received a sustained and mostly positive response. The voices of dissent

were not sustained and were mostly concerned with reiterating the value of traditional archival skills, particularly that of understanding and supporting the process of historical research, rather than rejecting the concept of a politicised archives, or dismissing “the margins” as a matter of concern for information curators. In addition to being a catalyst for specific actions to engage with marginalised people, the new discourse seemed also to have resonance for practitioners whose responsibilities included work with “non-traditional” material (such as oral history projects) or with “fringe” collections. In these cases, long-standing work began to be presented in the context of the ideas introduced by the discourse of the political record and the postmodern archives.

The research found that certain types of marginalisation, mainly in explicitly politicised areas, had been responded to professionally, in some cases in practical ways (such as engagement between archivists and marginalised groups) and that the process of response had prompted theoretical and conceptual debate and development. The discourse on marginalisation and marginality was initiated fundamentally through the politicisation of the curation of records in apartheid South Africa. These articles (Harris 2002; Cook 2001) that presented an interpretation of information curation as an intrinsically political act did not refer to the earlier and more sporadic reflections on the political implications of archives and records management. Instead they presented a postmodernist reflection on the profession, informed by the situation in what was by that time post-apartheid South Africa. That this reflection had resonances elsewhere, although the apartheid regime was unique to South Africa, was reflected in the fact that literature discussing margins and other countries – Cambodia, Canada, the United Kingdom – very often referred to these first discussions. The conceptualisation of marginality, therefore, was linked from the

beginning with specific political situations and, probably as a result, focused on very concrete manifestations of margin, usually with a negative connotation. However, “marginality” conceptualised broadly, and especially without any negative connotation, that is to say, conceptualised as a valid state and not one that requires remedial action, is not well reflected within the professional discourse on marginality. Cook and Schwartz summarised this need thus “The point is for archivists to (re)search for the missing voices,” regardless of whose voice it was; the voice that was missing from the records under consideration (Schwartz and Cook 2002, pg. 17). They also (ibid) drew on Harris to sound a word of warning, not to romanticise the margins.

8.4 Responses to marginalisation

The second research question was formulated not only to ensure that the research was informed by existing ideas but to determine whether or not the existing responses could continue to be sufficient in the event that the interpretation of “the margins” could be expanded. It was also formulated in order to learn from the experience of professionals who took active steps to engage with marginalisation, as any practical application of a theoretical idea must take cognisance of the real-world capabilities and limitations of the practicing information curator.

8.5 Overview of engagement

The accounts of direct engagement provided much food for thought in terms of illuminating the details of the issues and challenges requiring resolution, or at least attention. These accounts also illustrate different scenarios in which curators may have the opportunity, or be obliged to find ways, to enable action or discussion in this area; the nature of the employer may be one, being approached by an interested group may be another, legislation may be a third catalyst. Naturally these situations

will be very bound by their practical circumstance; the choices the curator can make are formed and informed by the catalyst. On the other hand, the more rhetorical opportunities for engagement – the processes through which the curator goes in order to understand and control the record – provide perhaps more opportunity for speculation on the possibilities for further development. This is in part because the focus for analysis is the curator's interpretation and processing of the record qua record, irrespective – in a way – of who in particular is the subject. There are of course practical concerns that shape how a curator deals with records for which they have responsibility, in particular the resources of time and money available to them will determine what kind of processes are carried out. These limitations apply everywhere. But analysing a process such as appraisal (Hedstrom 2002) draws attention to the unavoidable relationship: between the curator and the record.

Considering the question of potential response in light, not of engagement with the individuals whose marginalised position gives that characteristic to the record but of engagement with the record – with all records – foregrounds the record as a text, rather than as an instrument to enact or reflect social positions or injustices.

It is a certainty that this level of processing of a collection is beyond the means of a great many archivists. At the same time, in a way the proposal for using literary criticism as a means of disrupting the narrative of records has the virtue of at least demanding only that the curator recognizes the textual nature of the record: that it has been created for a purpose, and that that purpose is not a “simple” reality but a complex construction. A curator that does not have the resource to go into that kind of detail may not have the resource to engage with the margins at all. But curators who are prepared, professionally, to bring philosophy and critical faculty to their engagement with the record will be prepared to take advantage of whatever

opportunity might come their way: all that is required of them is that they have a complex understanding of texts and how they work. This is not an unreasonable expectation of a profession that is focused on text (rather than on material object), and it does not limit the practitioner to adhering to any particular philosophy, any particular political opinion, or to curate a particular type of record.

The third research question arose from the first two: if there was the possibility of extending the conceptualisation of “the margins”, then there was the possibility that the new responses could be developed also.

The literature also revealed the different facets of marginality with which the profession analysed the topic, or, the different problematics identified during reflection or analysis. While many articles reflected on the absence of certain groups from “the record” others investigated the sometimes difficult relationship between the record, the subject thereof, and the curator (especially as representative of an institution or service that created the record with which the subject may have a troubled relationship). In seeking to ascertain how information curation has, through its professional literature, conceptualised the margins, guidance was sought from literature in other research areas such as anthropology or postcolonial studies. Though these were areas also drawn upon by writers in information curation, some of the ideas inherent in anthropological or postcolonial analysis of margins were not taken up. In particular, there is little discussion in information curation of margins-within-margins, where subaltern groups have within them those whom they oppress. The absence of this aspect may be the result of the fact that the relationship between professional curation and non-mainstream records often arises due to politicisation of the latter and the articulation of a particular injustice.

8.6 Interpretation of marginality

The professional literature developed a particular interpretation of “marginalised” and this conceptualisation – based on concrete examples of marginalisation occurring because of particular political or social ideology – could be accepted as sufficient. But the discourse was informed, right from the beginning, by ideas and factors from outside the profession. It was shaped by political situations and ideologies in different countries and by postmodernist philosophies which originated with, and were developed by, disciplines other than information curation. This therefore invites continued engagement with political and philosophical ideas and analytical frameworks that may be applicable to information curation but are not developed through focusing on that discipline.

This research proposed that while archival theory had been extensively informed by drawing on ideas and philosophies from elsewhere, this process could be enhanced in a way that would facilitate engagement with marginality and *otherness*. The proposal, at the conclusion of this research, that literary theory/literary criticism and, in particular, Bakhtin’s concept of “carnival” and disruption, could be of value in supporting the aim of developing an inclusive and diverse archives, is not made in opposition to the alternatives covered in Chapter 5. These initiatives have “failed” only if the aim was to conclusively provide the “solution” to the competing demands for validation and inclusion of, on the one hand, the mainstream, familiar and familiarly-important, and on the other, the fringe, the unfamiliar and the undesirable, the “decidedly unsavoury” of Tyacke’s comment (Tyacke 2001 pg. 2). There is no sense in which this proposal is concluding that the application of literary theory to records is the right way to respond. It does, however, have [three] benefits. It does not expect the curator to adhere to any particular philosophy or political viewpoint,

instead, the only ideology that the curator will need to embrace is that of the importance of the margins, the fringe, the unfamiliar. As an approach, it is not predicated on the expectation that the curator will be doing anything in addition to their regular work (in terms of engaging in groups, for example) or even initiating new and possibly costly projects (such as oral history) within their workplace. This approach is, of course, time-consuming, but a curator who does not have time to describe or arrange a collection, or create more granular and detailed records management documentation, is unlikely to have time to engage with the margins any other way, either. In the expectation that the concerned curator is engaging only with the records in their care, there is the possibility of scalability. A third benefit of this approach is that it is located between the curator and the record. There is no reassuring sense that exclusion is being dealt with by someone else – that exclusion or marginalisation happens somewhere else, usually in politically unstable regimes or that “unheard voices” are being recorded by someone else. Looking for absences, and reading “against the grain”, encourages the recognition that the construction of the record, and exclusions, minor or major, from that record, can happen anywhere.

8.7 Research Question 3: Potential for development of response mechanisms

Many, though not all, of the responses to marginalisation that were discussed in the literature focused on some form of engagement between the information curator and individuals who either created or were the subject of records. In some cases, the engagement was the result of changes in legislation, and in many cases it was the result of an initiative between an organisation, usually an archives, and an established group. In analysing both the interpretation and the response, two additional questions emerged during the research, which influenced the conclusions regarding the possible development of further responses. One was whether or not it

was inevitable that information curation, as a profession, is reactive to the question of marginalisation. That is to say, will the professional response of engagement inevitably happen only after a social group or an issue has been politicised, as has been the pattern so far, rather than that the archives (of whatever type) becomes a site where the process of politicisation happens? The second was whether it was possible for all curators to have, or be required to have, opportunity to engage with questions of marginality, regardless of the subject of the records for which they were responsible.

On both of these points, the use of literary theory has potential value. As an approach to understanding records, it encourages a focus on the text as a text, to be interpreted in the context of the society that produced it and the other texts produced contemporaneously. It discourages acceptance of any narrative at face-value and encourages “reading against the grain”; looking for what is absent and unsaid. Different political philosophies will inform this reading approach; feminists seeking the absences and silences of women, Marxists those of working classes, and so on. In order to avoid proposing any particular underlying philosophy, Bakhtin’s theory of carnival can be adopted instead. Bakhtin’s discussion on carnival is not his most influential idea, but his theory of dialogism, influenced by Saussure and other linguists, and later developed further as intertextuality, identifies him as a philosopher of relevance to postmodern understanding of text, record and archives. Prescott mentions the ‘domestication’ of Bakhtin since Bakhtin’s theories, particularly that of carnival, ‘are frequently cited at second hand and there is limited engagement with his original work. Any new idea that becomes accepted also becomes domesticated, as vocabulary and the concepts – or some even attenuated form thereof – become familiar and embedded. Carnival as a concept, as presented by

Bakhtin, is the constant presence of otherness and inversion being, only occasionally, celebrated and acknowledged. The opposites of mainstream life, the outraging of rules and the inversion of structures is, in Bakhtin's view, an on-going fact that is necessary for the continuation of regular structures of society. "Reading against the grain" in search of the absence and silence of the opposite, other, underlying and out-lying of contemporary society is arguably an opportunity to recognise the marginal and the liminal that have not been, and may never be, politicised.

The mechanism proposed in Chapter 7, the combination of literary criticism and the Bakhtinian concept of carnival is intended to be a neutral approach, a template for use where the professional does not have a preferred analytical framework. That is to say, there will be many professionals who already have a self-conscious political stance, whose political ideology is not so mainstream as to be regarded simply as common sense or "the way things are" - they may, for example, be Marxists or feminists or may have an active interest in a particular issue, such as racism, homophobia and so on, and will therefore already have a standpoint which will inform their professional work. For those who do not, the proposal here will enable professionals to engage with the records for which they are responsible, with a view to identifying the non-mainstream, the alternative and the excluded in the society that created them.

The advantages of using literary criticism as an analytical approach are that, whatever the individual skills of information curators, they can be expected to understand how to interact with a text, whatever the format of that text might be. It does not presuppose that any curator is politicised in any particular regard, and it does not prescribe what is being sought or how its absence be responded to. It can

be scaled in that some curators may have the personal, personnel and financial resources to act in response to a bias that they have identified and others may not but the opportunity to make the identification has been taken. It is also scaleable in the sense that the responsibilities of an individual practitioner may allow for greater or lesser time to pursue this kind of interrogation of a text. A practitioner working on a catalogue of a collection of records not currently used as part of business processes will have a different opportunity for engagement than someone working primarily with modern current records. For one thing, they (may) have more time, and for another, any anxieties that a business may have regarding “reading across the grain” of their records – anxieties to do potentially with reputation, commercial status, legal liability, confidentiality or obligations under information legislation – will also be more current and possibly more difficult to negotiate.

In summary, this research aimed to extend the discussion of marginalisation and exclusion as a problematic of professional practice. The research was primarily based on the literature produced by professional information curators for a professional audience and this literature was augmented where necessary by that of outside professions, such as ethnography. Chapter 4 presented analysis of marginalisation as a characteristic or status, and to thereby extend the concept to include people, records or lived experiences which were not currently politicised, but were not sure of routinely being reflected in professionally curated resources. The ways in which professional archivists and records managers responded to the challenges raised by the re-appraisal of professional theory and practice were outlined in Chapter 5. Considering the factors raised in Chapter 4, especially the extension of the concept of marginal, Chapter 6 assessed whether or not there were any alternatives for response that could be explored, or explored further, and also

analysed in more detail the concept of “liminality” that was first raised in Chapter 3. Having concluded that there could be meaningful development of archival theory by increasing the training in and engagement with philosophy, Chapter 7 proposed that the analytical framework used in literary criticism could be used also in dealing with the non-literary text that is, arguably, the records created by a society as a whole. Literary criticism is open to specific philosophical stances, and though some of the usual points of analysis for literature (e.g., aesthetics or language) are not always applicable to non-literary texts that are being processed in a business or professional environment, some – particularly the issues of genre and rhetoric – can be an informative addition to understanding text and how knowledge and information is created. Given that literary theory, in the context of this research, is intended to facilitate “hospitality to the other” but does not in itself oblige the critical reader towards a particular analysis, in Chapter 7, the Bakhtinian concept of carnival was proposed as a default approach.

A good archives may not – could not - contain all records but it should contain – in the records and the professional documentation create to manage and contextualise it - all the questions that contemporary society has left for future generations to answer – why did we think that these things, and not those things, were important? Opening up the current conceptualisation of “the margins” into a more abstract form closes off the possibility that marginalisation can or should be resolved finally. A more abstract approach proposes instead that the margins are a constant, inevitable and often necessary part of the mainstream. Neither this, nor the relating of records with fictive and imaginative texts, are new. Cook attributes to postmodernism the virtue of being a “poetic inspiration” for a new conceptualisation of professional practice (Cook 2001 pg. 22). Harris regrets the separation of the imaginative from

rationalist discourse (Harris 2000, pp 12- 13). Attempts to capture this aspect of society should, therefore, be an on-going enterprise, rather than one confined to a response to conflict or injustice perpetrated upon the marginal; the aim of the attempt is to maximise the diversity of the textual residue of contemporary society, not to redress a political injustice, though the two may often overlap. The caution sounded by Carter and Ketelaar with regard to how excluded people should be included causes, by extension, a possible ambiguity in Kaplan's re-assessment of appraisal, "We are what we keep, we keep what we are..." The content of the archives is a record in itself, in its totality; are curators "speaking for the other" by reflecting the neglected in a place that might suggest that society was not, in fact, neglectful? If society keeps what it is, and it is neglectful, marginalising and exclusionary, then is it arguable that those characteristics ought to be reflected, by absences, in the archives? In trying to include in the official record (however communally that is created) those who are not organically included, might archivists perform an act of just redress, of historiographical foresight, well-intentioned but ultimately unjustifiable interference? A more theoretical highlighting of absence, incompleteness or lack of agency in relation to records could be a compromise between accepting the absence without comment, and misleadingly implying that the absence had not occurred.

8.8 Possible implications of engagement with a comprehensive "other"

The title of this thesis proposes by implication that a polyphonic archives, a trace, so to speak, of human society, curated in a way to bring out a multitude of voices, would be a positive achievement. Is it possible and is it desirable? It is both possible and desirable once it is recognised that there should be no expectation (at the risk of belabouring the metaphor) of an attractive or polished chorus, and that the polyphony might more accurately be a cacophony. It is to be expected that the

voices in the archives – however loosely the term *archives* is understood – will be in harmony with each other, but this will not mean that the marginal, the liminal and the banal will provide a counter-point or contrasting colour to the main themes or concerns of the day. Curated traces of the past, even the recent past, that deliberately seek out the marginal will be seeking to create a polyphony created not by many voices singing a variation on a theme, but by random voices singing with neither conductor nor score, whenever and for as long as they wish, not just many voices but many, many different melodies.

The title also invokes the image of the archives as a map, but specifically a map of places not usually depicted, where alternative, even competing narratives of some shared thing – a city, as in Calvino's tale, or an event or an on-going experience like a job – are given equal value. If the archives is to be a place where the "invisible cities" of the disregarded and the liminal are mapped then it may not be because of any tangible presence. Rather the presence of these aspects of human society may only be in the reflections on their absence, by inference, by referencing the intangible rather than by curating the tangible. The information curator, be they archivist or records manager, will be working blind, as would a cartographer in an invisible city, trying to adapt to the redundancy of sight as the dominant sense, trying to discover which sense is most appropriate and, inevitably, missing some things, falling over others and occasionally wondering why they bother when the activity is sometimes fruitless and always difficult to justify.

The following section summarises in brief some possibilities and possible consequences of a more comprehensive and widespread engagement with the "other."

8.8.1 Practice of carnival – developing one's own counter-archives

How an information curator could actively seek and embrace the 'other', the *counter* in relation to the material for which they are responsible, depends very much on their individual situation. Any curator seeking to do so by acquiring or retaining records based on an assessment of what would constitute *other*, the *counter*, or the carnivalesque, would need in the first instance to be very alert to the potential consequences of doing so. It is unlikely that many archivists and records managers would be in a position to embrace the *other* by collecting more records. In some cases, those people who might constitute or embody the *other* may not want to be drawn into a mainstream archives. Their activities may in a particular context be subversive or even illegal, which would potentially compromise the repository, thereby compromising any curator not working in a professional capacity within a subversive archives (in which case, the point of carnival as a framework is redundant). Information curators will not be in a position to collect records without having received from their employer some sort of official sanction to do so, and it may be difficult or impossible to present a convincing case to assign resources to records that might be outside an official collecting policy, or do not arise from the organisation's business, or might constitute any kind of risk (e.g., to reputation or business) to the organisation. If, for example, an organisation becomes subject to an information request under information legislation, discovery that there has been, as it were, a counter-archives retention schedule may not be well received. Similarly, records (such as photographs or e-mails) of social life of a business may arguably be *other* to the business' official narrative of itself, but individual members of staff may object to unofficial material about them being retained. This is one potential barrier to the application of carnival in the archives.

A second is the question of time. As far back as 1984, Cox was noting that the “ultimate mission” of the archival profession was threatened by lack of resources “to appraise, arrange and describe, and provide reference to historical records” (Cox 1984, pg 186). To propose that information curators, whether responsible for manuscript collections or for the management of current business records, engage with textual analysis and the application of any literary theory, let alone one of the more obscure ones, may be seen as either wasteful or utopian. This, of course, is the point.

The curator of current business records, whose responsibilities include the development of business classification schemes, file plans and retention schedules, may seek to install *the other* by maintaining a schedule of what is not retained. With regard to information that is retained as some form of evidence (e.g., information to demonstrate that a particular country did or did not possess a particular chemical, biological or other weapon), the curator might find the spirit of carnival in retaining (or, more prudently, retaining references to the location of) conspiracy theories. Potentially, retaining evidence of failures on behalf of, or the views of critics of, the record creator could contribute to a counter archive but there is the danger that this would align *counter* with negative or critical alternatives to a more accepted narrative. On the other hand, retaining a library of those texts with which the organisation’s documentary rhetoric has an intertextual connection thereby raising questions about what an organisation means by saying something is “their” policy and thereby draw attention to the literary and rhetorical (rather than purely factual) nature of administrative documentation. This approach could, in fact, also be applied to the creation of archival and records management documents, such as finding aids

or retention schedules (and a view has been put forward regarding the influence of textual design and the curator's linguistic and rhetorical choices, Fintland 2016).

How an information curator might manifest carnival or the concept of *counter* in relation to their description of records in their care would clearly depend on the contents of the collection. Consequently any suggestions are to a degree random, but there might be opportunities for an archivist for describing not a family but their servants. In colonial situations looking for signs of those who previously owned the land and were (depending on the nature of events) dispossessed in some way. Even within this latter situation, there may be additional opportunities for engagement with carnival, by disrupting the narrative of the dispossessed or the oppressed (Dunne 2004).

Another possibility for engaging with carnival would be by subverting the focus (or foci) of description. Seeking evidence of everyday documentation may not be a new idea (as has been indicated in 4.1.1) but further disruption might be achieved by seeking to find or foreground evidence of for example, ruins and abandoned places rather than buildings, by focusing not on people or person-driven events as the narrative framework but on objects or on senses or emotion (Chen 2016; Cifor 2016) or perhaps even by turning the attention of the finding aid not on the content of the records but on the history of their provenance and acquisition.

Combining literary criticism and Bakhtin's idea of carnival and proposing it as a way to engage with marginality in information curation may not seem the most pragmatic approach; it is valuable to consider the question of curatorial engagement with marginality from the point of view of pragmatism. MacNeil summarises a pragmatic point of view as inviting a question, not as to whether "we have gotten a certain thing right", but rather as to "what it would be like to believe it" (MacNeil 2001, pg. 46). If

“hospitality to the other” were to be proposed as a professional obligation rather than an individual concern, then what, if anything, might be the consequence?

8.8.2 Politicisation of the role

For information curators to become the kind of profession that insists on preserving the dirty linen that would very probably become part of any truly ‘total archives’ potentially has consequences. Would it even be possible to have so all-encompassing a remit that the archives becomes the location of potential embarrassments – leaving aside the question of space and resource, would publicly-funded institutions be permitted to do so?

Klopfer characterises oral history in post-apartheid South Africa as having two roles, one being to “challenge nineteenth-century objectivist history” and the other being as “a celebration of heritage” (Klopfer 2001:101). These two roles can help to illustrate the dynamic nature of responses to marginality: that which once was a challenge can become a celebration and, thereby, inevitably lose at least some of its radical aspect. The point at which the disregarded record, or the records of disregarded people, become (more) mainstream may be a reflection of their improved social position. At the same time, loss of a radical aspect in one of the profession’s responses to an essentially political situation requires – if a meaningful mechanism of response is to be maintained – that that this aspect be replaced.

Archives would no longer have a handmaiden role or a neutral image, and possibly no longer be seen as a place where a personal sense of identity can be reinforced. This is not a small point: information curation would become radicalised. “The archives” would no longer be seen solely as the place where truth or evidence is to be found, there would be constant anxiety for individuals, business, institutions and

bureaucracies that “the archives” is the place where dirty linen is stored and accountability starts.

Would the profession want this change in the way it is perceived by governments, other professions, the traditional users, potential employers? It would of course also be arguable that nothing is really changing, it is simply that the focus has shifted. Individuals would be able to come in and find or re-establish a sense of identity; but they would be different individuals.

This should be a matter of debate; it is not the first time that the role and function of archivists and records managers has been reviewed and discussed; in Yaco and Betancourt’s article about archivists and activists, one respondent is quoted as saying “We are obliged to be as neutral as neutral can be on all issues... but I also feel like I am not alone among museum people trying to sneak political opinions into exhibits” (Yaco and Betancourt 2013 pg. 268). The question of political neutrality, the possibility and desirability thereof, is not new and should be reviewed regularly. In their chapter on critical ethnography in Denzin and Lincoln’s *Landscape of Qualitative Research*, Foley and Valenzuela discuss the negative impact experienced by “activist anthropologists” who find academic publishers are unsympathetic to their work, and who may leave academia either as result of disillusionment or of being ‘pushed out’. According to the authors, it is permitted to be political only within certain limits; ‘scholarship must be political in an academically acceptable manner’ and it would be instructive to see whether the same is true in information curation.

Whether one concurs with Dodge’s somewhat apocalyptic anxieties about the state of modern culture (at the time of writing, at least) or not, hers is a comprehensive vision of archival role, and her interpretation of bricolage as leading to “nomad

science” - that takes from many different professions and philosophies and that embraces difference – encourages a diversity within archival theory. In addition, in her characterisation of “nomad science” – “which aspires to be ‘heterogeneous, flowing, discontinuous, indefinite, ambulatory” - Dodge incorporates in her final assessment of a potential consequence of engagement with “the other” which is rarely specifically identified in texts dealing with such engagement: “the radical potential”(Dodge 1997, pg. 125).

The practical consequences of trying to increase the multiplicity of voices in the archives may themselves be multifarious. That the writings of Theodore Schellenberg were a response to the unprecedented multiplication of the volume of information being created within the United States government during and following the Second World War has been noted many times. In 1991, Brothman quoted seven authors expressing concern about over-documentation of the past, rather than a lack of sources; twenty-four years later the rate of information production has continued to increase. If liminal or banal records are a way of enriching the trace of contemporary life, their value and their drain on limited resources will have to be expressly balanced against the value and demands of, say, records related to governance or justice.

If “hospitality to the other” were to become a professional obligation rather than an individual concern, then there will be difficulties about introducing, supporting and embedding it. There may be questions about its validity in training; if it is not valued by many employers, it may not be valued by people spending time and money preparing to be employees. The mechanism proposed in Chapter 7 of using a particular type of literary criticism will be impractical for some information curators because they will not have the resources to act upon it. They may not have the time

or the staff to do much with the records in their care other than provide them with basic signs of identification and to ensure their safety, and they may be under great pressure to minimise the amount of material retained. Some practitioners might find it difficult to justify their activities on the basis of philosophy or literary theory, given that this would be perceived as an unorthodox approach by many organisations. However, these problems would also face curators who wished to perform any professional work outside the immediate demands of their job description. An organisation that did not have any express reason to connect with a specific marginalised group might refuse resource to store or process records not immediately associated with their primary activity, and refuse to allow the curator to allocate time to engage professionally with any marginalised group.

However, a benefit of encouraging professional engagement in this area is that the profession will be extending its claim to relevance to all members of society. Prescott points out the relationship between the changing requirements of scholars and the changing appraisal or selection activities of archivists, whereby material that was once selected for destruction 'now attract great scholarly interest, with major implications for the treatment of, for example, personal instance papers' (Prescott, in Craven 2008 pg. 48).

8.8.3 Training and Education

To propose the use of literary theory as a framework for analysis for information curators would require changes to the way professionals are trained. It is arguable, and has been argued, that information curation theory would benefit from actively encouraging professionals to be well informed in areas outside their professional expertise. Brown's collection of essays (2011) encourages theoretical engagement with a wider range of philosophies, and Caswell (2013) similarly recommends

practitioners read outside their area of expertise. In general, if engagement with the marginal became a professional obligation, and if the interpretation of “marginal” became extended in the ways outlined in this research, then the training of information curators may have to change to accommodate the development of specialisations.

Engagement of this nature, especially in relation to marginalisation, could potentially lead to a change in the perception of the profession as a whole, as it perceives itself and as it is perceived. Information curation is often presented, within its own literature and as it is reflected socially, as supportive: a handmaid to history, a personal resource for individuals, or a support service in business. To expect professionals to explicitly seek to foreground people and life experiences that are of minimal interest may add an explicitly political element that some professionals may reject, as might employers, as inappropriate. Broadly speaking archivists, and later, records managers have traditionally been seen as a supporting role. Initially they supported governments and scholars, particularly historians but in recent years, the kinds of responsibilities expected of these allied professions have grown significantly. The descriptions of job vacancies for which archivists and records managers are invited to apply suggest that the incumbent is expected to be expert in a very wide field: information management, law (specifically information legislation), financial management, human management, business process analysis, and information technology. Even though the more specialist skills of information curators may be reflected also, such a varied list suggests that professionals are seen less as specialists and more as a sort of well-informed administrative factotum. For the archives within ‘the mainstream’ to become a site of challenge or resistance - which may be a development if engagement with that which is marginalised involves

implications for or about the political circumstances leading to the marginalisation - rather than a neutral reservoir of information, is a significant change, and one for which the profession as a framework and as a combination of individuals needs to be prepared, not only in terms of how to take and justify their decisions but how to cope with any consequences. This will alter (because it formalises a different attitude) the perception of the profession and of its role. This could cause confrontation and conflict with those implementing or benefiting from the contemporary mainstream ideology and it would almost inevitably cause conflict and tension within the profession (as has happened in, for example, the medical profession when there are debates about medical ethics).

8.8.4 Development of the appropriate language of archival discourse for this area

A political aspect to an information-related profession is not necessarily new. In the introduction to *Critical Theory for LIS*, Leckie identifies three benefits to embedding critical theory in Library and Information Science scholarship, and the third of these is that it will enable LIS practitioners to respond articulately to current issues facing the field, e.g., tax revolts, cultural conservative demands to cleanse the contents of libraries (and their screens), the incursion of ever more advertising into content, and the overwhelming demands to make libraries responsive to (and reflective of) the neoliberal idea of the market (Brosio 1994; Buschman 2003). It is possibly too limited a view to say that “our discourse . . . tends to favor technical and managerial language use, which in turn prevents librarians from critically examining and evaluating information resources and systems,” (Andersen 2005, pg. 21) and discourse within information curation has developed significantly over the last 20 years, but further development would be required.

Leckie also draws attention to concerns about intellectual freedom and invasion of privacy arising from, in her example, ‘the umbrella of the USA Patriot Act’, where the library becomes a place where restrictions on the former and instances of the latter are facilitated, because of LIS’s lack of reflection on the cultural and political consequences of technology (in this case, of technology used to track book searching).

8.9 Contribution to knowledge

This research augments existing research information curation by explicitly articulating the characterisation of marginality that developed through material published by and for the profession. It further extends this conceptualisation, by drawing attention to the quotidian ways in which marginalisation, and exclusionary ideology, is implemented and administered. In doing so, this research also helps to clarify the question of the marginal in more mundane, less overtly-politicised environments such as businesses.

This extension of the concept proposes by implication that responsibility for the marginal in contemporary society is held by all information curators, rather than solely those who have either a special interest or responsibility for a “special collection.” In proposing a means by which this responsibility might be acted upon, this research focuses upon the interaction between the professional and the text, rather than on that between the profession(al) and the creators or subjects of the text. This focus increases the opportunities for professional engagement with marginality. It increases also the potential for the information curator to be an active participant in the social process of recognition of instances of marginality and exclusion, rather than being part of the more passive process of responding when these instances have been politicised by those who have endured them. Finally, in

proposing this more active role, this research adds a fillip to the traditional characterisation of the profession itself, that of having a radical and disruptive role in society, rather than purely a supportive and facilitative one.

8.10 Further research

Awareness of the limitations of and gaps in the preserved record of past and contemporary society is not new. Ham, one of the earliest to express concern about the profession's tendency to focus on the records of mainstream society, drew (20 years after his exhortation to take care of marginal records) on the words the founder of Massachusetts Historical Society in recommending that curators should "not wait [] at home for things to fall into the lap, but prowl[] about like a wolf for the prey" (Jeremy Belknap quoted by Ham 1993, pg. 38). Yaco et al (2015) used the oxymoronic term "passive participant" to refer to people who played no active part in a significant historical event but yet had their lives significantly affected by that event. Their example is the children, both black and white, of segregationist Birmingham, Alabama, who were not directly involved in the protests in that city in the 1960s and who were not directly the victims or perpetrators of the violence and racism that were endemic to the city at that time.

In the course of this research, topics of interest and relevance were necessarily unpursued. Two areas in particular that would be valuable areas of studies in themselves are orality and ethnography, both touched upon briefly in Chapter 3 and which, particularly if taken in conjunction, could be valuable to information curation research.

Oral history has a long history as an "alternative" form of record, often used to preserve unofficial histories of great events such as war, or to preserve folk or popular culture. It is not uncommon, though, that in discussion of oral history in the

context of information curation, oral history is sometimes presented uncritically. That is to say, writings by and for information curators on, for example, oral history projects or resources do not make explicit reference to the degrees to which oral records share the same weaknesses as any other kind of record, in terms of partisanship or unreliability, though there is reflection on the potential legal and ethical challenges (e.g., Pymer 2011). What is also an interesting area is the oral nature of the record, the elements or characteristics of orality, and how it differs from the textual – the importance or otherwise of performative elements such as body language and audience reaction, what is considered appropriate in an oral account that would not be included in a written one. In addition, oral records are sometimes seen as being in opposition to the textual. However, the literature of other professions, including history, have also investigated the different but interlinked roles of oral and textual in the same society. Of particular value to the question of marginality would be the informal aspect of orality, that of rumour and gossip. If the oral record is often the unofficial and supporting record in relation to the written, then rumour and gossip are the unofficial version of the oral, though they can have a practical impact (Kumar 2000).

Much of the literature relevant to this research arose from engagement with archival or personal records, rather than business records in their business context. As discussed in Chapter 7, it is perhaps easier to see how engagement with the margins might be achieved in an archival context than in a business or government one. However, a number of articles (e.g. in the *Journal of Documentation*) from areas outside information curatorship have reflected on the potential value of ethnography within business (also see Trace on ethnography). Most information curators writing on the processes and mechanisms for devising and implementing a records

management programme in an organisation report engaging in some form of ethnographic activity, e.g., where laws do not direct how long a record should be kept, the creators and users are interviewed.

Interestingly enough, despite the literature on the role of the curator in creating the archives, and the conscious move away from valuing “the invisible hand of the archivist” (Belovari 2013, pg. 144), there has been no analysis in the literature (or the data) of the working practices of archivists and/or records managers. There has been an assessment of finding aids (MacNeil 2012) but no documentary or even business-process. In reflecting on the absence of archival participants in early discussions of the archival aspect of the “condition of postmodernism”, Schwartz references Brown and Davies-Brown’s observation that “the power of archivists and curators is embedded in technical-rational processes that are ostensibly non-political”, and their intention of revealing the “ideological or political dimensions of micro-processes of archival and curatorial concerns” (Schwartz 2006, pg. 5, quoting Brown and Davies-Brown 1998, pg 4). Schwartz’s point is that in doing so the authors do not reference archivists at all (thereby undermining the persuasiveness of their argument), but an equally significant point is that no similar investigation – of the political significance of archival processes – has taken place in the published works of information curators. In light of this, while research into oral records (including rumour and gossip) and ethnography in records in general would be valuable, equally valuable would be their focus on the working practices of information curators.

8.11 Final observation

Scattered through the professional literature are articles, on different topics, that draw on quotations from literature, literary commentators and musicians in order to

crystallise a point or a theme that they wished to capture. Harris has quoted from Bob Dylan more than once, as has Cook, who also drew on Elvis Presley and Neil Young, as did his fellow-Canadian Brothman. A similar crystallisation for the conclusions of this research, and a suitable projection of the required approach of the profession to the question of engagement with the fringe, the excluded and the liminal, might be from Beckett's *Worstward Ho*: "Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better" (Beckett 1983 pg. 2). This is not to say that previous responses to challenges to engage with marginality or with the political nature of records were failures, it is that all responses will fail if the aim is to remove or resolve "the problem". In a similar but comparatively more prolix vein, Cook writes that the postmodern journey for the archivist is not a circular one, "but open-ended, listening for new possibilities and documenting new voices" (2001 pg. 28), and societal memory itself is arguably not "a thing" but a process (Olick and Robbins 1998). It is worth repeating reference to Harris' characterisation of social justice as something that must "always be coming" (Harris 2007 pg. 249), and Caswell, also drawing on Harris' observation, predicts that a truly pluralist archives, or an "archival multiverse," would be "a messy space, marked by contrast and divergence, and their ensuing discomforts" (Caswell 2013, pg. 276). Beckett's quote encapsulates the "true" state of the archives with regard to its engagement with the marginal and the apparently banal aspects of contemporary life: the mechanisms used to identify the margins, and to respond to the records created there, will change as society changes; the important consideration within the profession is that the debate continues and does not stagnate; there is no right answer.

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Appendix 1: List of Excluded Journals

- *Studies of Tribes and Tribals* (e.g., folk songs as historical reconstruction, social transformation and political orientation of tribes)
- *Collection Building* (e.g., librarian as ethnographer)
- *Crossroads (publication of the Centre for Southeast Asian Studies in Southern Illinois)*, e.g., on how history presented by elites of dominant cultural groups in Laos are accepted as truth at the expense of other groups' history of the same event
- *Journal of Communication* (e.g., semiotic analysis of on-line discourse on ecology)
- *History and Theory* (e.g., on the relationship between history and fiction in light of deconstructivism in history, on writing "unconventional" history, themed issue on secrets and lies)
- *Journal of Popular Culture* (e.g., exclusion of women from the subsequent narrative of the development of a particular form of popular culture, the value of situation-comedies as a means of political satire, reality television and the re-invention of national identity)
- *Current Anthropology* (e.g., an account by a social scientist of his attempt to describe fieldwork from memory only; morphology of human culture,
- *Museum Anthropology* (e.g., on the relationship between museum practice and anthropology; on museum displays and the creation of knowledge)
- Papers such as working papers or theses made available on university or other websites (e.g., on archives and chaos theory, on cities as a way of remembering identity, exclusion of women from the archives)

Topics published in "core" journals but not used:

The record acting as a "mediating artefact" or as a boundary object (in a theatrical and a law-enforcement context respectively); serendipity in information access; recordkeeping and the process of canonisation. These topics were not seen as central to the focus of the research.

Appendix 2: Search Terms

Activism

Ancient Historiography

Ancient History

Authority

Collective memory

Community

Contest*

Createdness (of knowledge)

Culture

Cultural Heritage

Deconstruction

Difference

Disadvantage*

Display

Disrupt*

Ethics

Exclusion

Exhibition analysis

Feminism

Forgetting

Genre

Heritage

Hermeneutics

Historiography

History

Human Rights
Indigenous
Interpretation
Justice
Knowledge
Liminal, liminality
Margin, marginalised, marginalia
Material Culture
Memory, ethics, politics of, studies
Museums History
Narrative, narrativity
Performance, performativity
Politics, politicisation
Popular Culture
Post-Custod*
Post-colonial*
Power
Reconstruction
Representation
Social memory
Structuration
Subaltern
Subjectivity
Traditional
Unmediated

Appendix 3: Notes from Initial Reading:

Foscarini F.: “Diplomatics and genre theory as complementary approaches”

The author’s own tags: Diplomatics, rhetorical genre studies, structuration theory.

[Structuration theory now becomes a term to follow, as Bazerman – read before this article, mentioning Giddens, also refers].

The abstract suggests that this article is also conceptual rather than practical, and, like Bazerman, refers to records or documents as being a subset of “communicative actions.” The intention is to understand these actions, which clearly has a far broader reference than archives or their curation.

Question: Does the text appear to confirm or disprove something that had already been emerging?

An attitude is revealed that coincides with what I felt in a general, rather than a conclusive, way to be a likely part of any conclusion: that synthesis is (a) key. This may be synthesis in the sense of post-custodial archives (where the practice and expertise of professionals and non-professionals is synthesised) or in theoretical development and enrichment (where value is gained by learning from the reflection on and development of allied professions such as anthropology, ethnography, historiography, museum curatorship).

Any underlying queries or possible disagreements?

Author agrees with Heather MacNeil’s view that by seeking to analyzing documents very closely in order to identify their common attributes, diplomatics thereby eliminates the idiosyncrasies in documents that might be “an opportunity to get closer to the full meaning of any human actions” that could be revealed by

differences and oddities. But then, diplomatics is intended to be the study of the documents as artefacts, rather than of the individuals that created them.

Is that taking a very narrow view of the document, by leaving out that environmental network by which the document was created?

Or is it recognizing the original purpose of the document which was (presumably) focused on the content therein or the action to be enacted by the document? Were documents of this nature akin to Bazerman's description of ritualized oral history? The document ritualized (as well as reified) the event/requirement/action?

On page 397 she mentions the unofficial local work-arounds that develop, consciously or unconsciously, in response to rigid office procedures. I agree that tracing this is interesting and useful. However, is interpreting or giving context to a record skewed by an expectation that there is a reason behind its form? Many records in organizations are created in loose or informal ways as a result of ignorance or laziness – it is not a workaround, it is the first thing that popped into a person's head.

There is something in her statement that diplomatics “does not allow for any appreciation of the often unarticulated motives that guide human actions” that strikes me as rather like saying that chemistry does not allow for any investigation of physics or that romance novels do not allow for the investigation of crimes.

Also there is the possibility that diplomatics is being rather schematically represented. This occurred to me when reading page 392, where the phrase “The diplomatists' belief in the existence of a rational....reality” is used. This rings an alarm bell because adhering to an analytical approach does not mean “belief” and

does not mean that diplomatists themselves are uncritical of elements of their theory. Having thought this, I then noticed that the author only quotes Duranti and not any other writer on diplomatics.

On page 394 she summarizes Giddens' theory of structuration, which influences genre researchers:" genre researchers deny any deterministic view of the structures involved in social relations (including genres and the technologies used to produce and manipulate them) and recognize "agency," that is, freedom of action, to the individuals who, by enacting available "genre rules," may—deliberately or inadvertently—either reproduce existing genres (hence bringing them to their institutionalization) or challenge them (hence modifying them). But this is apparently all taking place in an organization – unless I am being too literal minded and assuming that organization refers to something like a business organization – in which case, can it be assumed that individuals are acting as individuals, and have agency? People who carry out documentation generally speaking are in positions at a level where they do as they are required, and they are not required to have agency or be innovative.

Any elements that need to be borne in mind as affecting interpretation or application?

Author is proposing the use of a stream of genre theory that has developed primarily in North America – presumably most texts will be from that context, which may or may not be transferrable to an Anglo-European environment.

Picking up on a proposal in MacNeil's article that diplomatics would work best in the framework of another philosophy or discipline, she suggests genre theory.

To what underlying or over-arching theories does it explicitly refer?

Structuration

Genre Theory

Bakhtin (centrifugal and centripetal forces, etc)

Summarizes the similarities and differences between genre theory and diplomatics.

How metaphorical/conceptual is the article?

Less so than it might at first appear. On page 394-395 she discusses the way in which the social and organizational dialogues and negotiations are manifested in different organizational records, which are as a result altered and adapted. On the one hand, on reading this, one does begin to worry about its practical application since archivists and records managers are not required to be semioticians or philosophers. On the other, her description of “genre tracing” sounds very like the way in which liminal records might be drawn out or recognized.

Questions raised: How would genre theory, as a mechanism or analytical method, be applied, and by whom, to records and archives? Would it be integrated into the documentation that information curators develop as a standard way of managing the information, or would it be an activity in which the curator engaged? So would “genre development” become a justification in a retention schedule? Or would curators be reading through their collection, or their records series, with a “genre theory” lens? Who does it? And when? By the time it gets to the interface between the curator and the information, is the engagement with genre theory passive (built in to training/theory/professional documentation) or active (something assessed in the course of professional work).

Characteristics of studies of genres: “all characterized by in-depth, longitudinal observations and “thick” descriptions of specific socio-cultural settings and the social activities engaged in within those settings, with particular regard to the interactions relevant to the production of “texts.”

Appendix 4: Initial Classification Used in the Bibliography

These classifications were done quickly, in order that the bibliography be granular to some level from the start. Neither the classifications nor the associated search terms are exhaustive. Included below is information both on searches done for the literature review and for texts used as data.

Where themes began to emerge these were noted, and are being added as an extra classification term to items in the bibliography (not as keywords, since most items imported from databases have their keywords already attributed by the author).

Many texts were relevant for more than one classification category, but were usually identified initially as relevant for a specific one.

Examples of search terms used: Interpretation, Ethnocentricity, Post-colonialism, Hermeneutics, Representation, Deconstruction, Feminism, Genre (theory), archives as sites of contested authority, archives + power, + identity, + exclusion, +heritage, + margin*, + structuration, + memory, + multivocality, Historiography (+ specific historical period), memory (collective, social), politics of memory, orality,

Literature Review

Texts which define, contribute to the process of definition, or offer parameters to the debate regarding the consequences of the unstable archives and the reconsideration of The Archives as a political force. These are texts that address these issues in broad ideological terms, which interpret in philosophical or ethical terms the motives or consequences.

It is very probable that many texts initially interrogated as literature review will fall into a number of other categories too. Since the dissertation is primarily text-based, there very probably will not be much distinction between a literature review, and the

texts that will be used as “primary data,” as the published output will contain the majority of the information analysed.

Example Texts:

- Brothman, Brien: Orders of Value: Probing the Theoretical Terms of Archival Practice
- Brothman, Brien: Afterglow: Conceptions of Record and Evidence in Archival Discourse
- Craven, Louise (ed): What Are Archives? Cultural and Theoretical Perspectives
- McKemmish, Sue et al (eds): Archives: Recordkeeping in Society
- Harris, V: The Archival Sliver: power, memory and archives in South Africa

Analytical Methods:

These texts were background research and so their role was to establish the intellectual landscape in which the dissertation will be placed.

The texts explained different analytical discourses, such as postmodernism, speech act or genre theory. These texts were the foundation documents, as it were, of the analytical methods required. Their interpretative approaches, or their analytical frameworks themselves were not be re-examined; that is, these were texts (and explications of texts) that were assumed to be commonly agreed.

Example texts:

- De Certeau, M: The Practice of Everyday Life
- Derrida, J: Archive Fever
- Foucault, M: The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language
- Said, Edward: *Orientalism*
- White, H: *Metahistory*
- Yeo, G: Representing the Act: Records and Speech Act Theory

Cultural Contructs:

Texts which analyze or explicate cultural contructions related to the research area.

This includes analyzing how such constructions are created in general, and specific instances of the creation of cultural norms or expectations in relation to specific areas (for example, identities, marginal groups, “The Archives”)

For example:

- (a) Analysis of the role played by archivists and other cultural curators/commentators/ mediators, (e.g., in creating, rather than just giving access to knowledge, in creating rather than just representing the past)
- (b) Analysis of the conceptual role of the institutional archives, including formal or formalized private archives (e.g., as sites of political power, as mechanisms of exclusion, as mechanisms of accountability in post-conflict situations).
- (c) Analysis of the conceptual role and interrogation of the nature of records and archives (e.g, are records evidence, are they memory, do they always record a transaction?) This may include texts that analyse the role of archives – or the possible functions of archives - in very abstract ways (e.g., the mobile phone as prosthetic memory) or which analyse records by means of unexpected or apparently unlikely prisms, in order to illustrate the nature of the record in its broad cultural context (e.g., the archives as ruin).
- (d) Descriptions or examples of marginalization, subalternity, instability, and ambiguity in relation to both people and records / record types, and texts which reflect on or explicate the nature of marginalization

Example texts:

- Althoff, G.: Medieval Concepts of the Past: Ritual, Memory, Historiography
- Bastian, J.: Reading colonial records through an archival lens: The Provenance of place, space and creation.
- Butler, B: “Othering” the Archives – from Exile to Inclusion and Heritage Dignity: The Case of Palestinian Archival Memory
- Dunne, T.: Rebellions: Memoir, Memory and 1798
- Foote, K: 'To Remember and Forget: Archives, Memory, and Culture'
- Goody, J The Theft of History
- Hall, E.: Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy
- Lamber, M.: The Classics and South African Identities
- Loewenthal, D: The Past is a Foreign Country
- Sawyer, K.: Observing Multiculturalism

Disciplinary History:

Like the analytical methods, these texts were for background knowledge, and for establishing the intellectual landscape in which the dissertation were placed.

This classification will include texts that focus on the development of archival practice, and the development of the social and cultural role of institutional archives, which will provide a framework for further investigation into the ideology that underlies these practices.

It will include similar texts on such other disciplines as are, or become, relevant, e.g., museums, anthropology, material culture, for the same reason; such as texts which reflect on the role of museum curators in creating, rather than just representing, knowledge.

It will include texts analysing or recounting the development of academic historiography and may include texts related to themed or “studies” history, e.g., post-colonial studies, feminist history, gender/queer studies, cultural studies, as these may emerge as relevant in relation to reading on analytical methods. This reading will provide much the same kind of framework for further analysis on how record-using paradigms developed (such as texts discussing ideologies underlying the way in which users expect to use records).

Examples of Texts:

- Brosius, M.: Ancient Archives and Archival Traditions: Concepts of Record-
 - Keeping in the Ancient World
- Clark, E. A: History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn
- Cook, T.: What's Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas since 1898 and the Future of the Paradigm Shift
- Head, R. *Knowing like a state: the transformation of political knowledge in*
 - *Swiss archive inventories, 1470-1770.*
- Hooper-Greenhill, E: Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge

- O'Brien, *Irish Governments and the Guardianship of Historical Records*,
▪ 1922-72
- Posner, E.: Archives in the Ancient World
- Ranger, F. (ed.), *Prisca Munimenta. Studies in archival & administrative history*

Practice Reassessment:

This is intended to identify literature that consciously reflects on elements of practice. This literature does not necessarily recommend specific changes but is asking some question about, for example, the validity or transferability of certain archives/records practices, or may reflect on something that is not part of usual archives/records practice but possibly should be included.

Example Texts

- Brown, Richard: Records Acquisition Strategy and its Theoretical Foundation: The Case for a Concept of Archival Hermeneutics
- Cunningham, A: Journey to the End of Night: Custody and the Dawning of a new era on the archival threshold
- Ham, F. Gerald: Archival Strategies for the Post-Custodial Era
- Hurley, Chris: Archivists and Accountability

Professional Education:

Education of cultural curators and of professional users of cultural resources such as archives, libraries and museums. This refers both to the usual or dominant educational background of the professional curator and professional user, as well as specifically the professional training that is undergone by archivists, records managers and those who are taught some type of record-using discipline. Some texts will also be of relevance for the history of the profession.

Example Texts:

- Bastian, J: Community Archives: the Shaping of Memory
- Cox, R: Ethics, Accountability and Recordkeeping in a Dangerous World

- Ellis, J: Keeping Archives
- Jenkinson, Hilary: A Manual of Archive Administration
- Schellenberg, T: Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques
- Shepherd, E & Yeo, G: Managing Records: A Handbook of Principles and Practice

Record-Using Modalities:

Texts that discuss how and why archives and records have been interrogated over time for ‘secondary purposes’ (i.e., not as part of the immediate business environment in which the records were created). The type of enquiries covered are those carried out by anyone on any record to “find out what happened”, to reflect on and analyse what the record says and how, and the implications thereof; anyone – academic or amateur historians, political activist, lawyer - who is using the record as a cultural resource, not as a business function. These texts will be informative on the paradigms and frameworks for archival practice.

These texts will discuss the kinds of records created over time, and for what purposes, including any discernible intentions of the records creator, since creators of records will often consciously use the act of record-creation in the hope of achieving a particular effect subtly or by implication, along with whatever is the explicit reason for creating the record.

The texts in this category also will discuss what other mechanisms, such as the spoken word or objects, that societies used to perform some of the functions associated with records, such as acting as evidence or transmitting knowledge of historical events. These texts are relevant for establishing how cultural expectations of what can or should be delivered by records – what function they should perform – developed. This will inform analysis of how cultural expectations were created and how these changed. It includes texts analyzing the historiography of specific

activities in relation to records and archives, e.g., how historians discuss and research unrecorded activities such as orality, performance or literacy in different historical periods, and what it is possible to say about these activities (how, currently, gaps in the record are negotiated).

Example Texts

- Bastian, Jeanette: "Play Mas": Carnival in the Archives and the Archives in the Carnival: Records and Community Identity in the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- Berry, C and MacKeith, L: Colliding Worlds in the Curatorial Environment: The Archivist and the Activist
- Burrow, John: A History of Histories: Epics, Chronicles, Romances and Inquiries from Herodotus and Thucydides to the Twentieth Century
- Josias, Anthea: Towards an Understanding of archives as a feature of collective memory
- Gunlaugsdottir, Johanna: The Human Side of ERMS: an Icelandic Study
- Krostenko, B A: Cicero, Catullus and the Language of Social Performance
- Valderhaug, G: Memory, Justice and the public record
- Vansina, J: Oral Tradition as History

Appendix 5: Text Analysis Worksheet

TEXT NAME: Oral History and the Canadian Labour Movement

RELEVANT CHAPTER(S) [i.e., to which chapters of the thesis is this relevant; this information was not always collection because some texts were valuable in more than one place and because the structure and focus of the thesis changed]

Chapter 5: Discourse/Marginal

Chapter Seven: Orality

1. CONTEXT/FIELD OF PRODUCTION OF AUTHOR:

UNKNOWN. Paper originally given to Canadian Oral History Association Annual Conference
1977

___ Professional Environment:

___ Professional Position (if known)

2. FRAMEWORK/NARRATIVE OF THE TEXT (Check one or more):

___ Metaphorical Interpretation ___ Practical/Aspirational

___ Case Study (practice based) ___ Case Study (historiographical)

___ Record Type Example ___ Record Source Example

___ Reflective/Aspirational

3. LIT REVIEW/DATA TEXT?

LIT/DATA

IDENTIFIED HOW? [i.e., citation or subject search]

____ Subject search in Archivaria on “oral history” _____

4. IS THERE A SPECIFIC TARGET AUDIENCE? (including, professional subsets, such as “digital archivists”

No _____

IS THERE ANY LOCALIZED SIGNIFICANCE (that may not be transferrable, e.g., it is only applicable to universities, or to a country/region etc)

5. Canadian based but transferrable
-

6. TEXT SUMMARY OR ABSTRACT (if present.)

Because written documents related to working-class history are relatively rare, oral history has become an invaluable alternative to enable a complete historical study of certain periods. The author describes the advantages and difficulties of this method...and concludes that it is necessary to use the source with caution. He ends by describing a number of initiatives and proposes establishing a central registry of projects, in order to better guide researchers. (my translation from French)

WHAT IS THE 'STORY' OF THE TEXT (THE FIRST READING)?

The article has the framework of a loose narrative about the development of oral history as a resource for researchers of Canadian labour history. It summarizes reasons for a dearth of documentary evidence, and also some of the weaknesses of oral history as a resource. It gives details of some particular instances of oral history projects, and reflects on the growth of oral history "industry".

IS THE TEXT DEALING WITH CURRENT PRACTICE? Y/N

It was contemporary when the article was written.

IF YES, IS IT CHALLENGING/PROBLEMATIZING PRACTICE?

It is advising at an overview level on how recorders, curators and users of oral history should approach the enterprise.

IS THE TEXT DEALING WITH MAINSTREAM OR MINORITY PRACTICE (e.g., unusual records?)

It deals with what was then a fairly new, but by then integrated, historical source. The subject

of the records were politically marginal.

IF THE TEXT IS CHALLENGING/ASPIRATIONAL IS IT PROPOSING A NEW TOOL TO ANALYSE OR A NEW TOOL FOR PRACTICE?

It is proposing reflection on hurriedly-developed practice, and proposing some principles by which to work.

IS THE TEXT DEALING WITH CURRENT THEORY (OR GAPS THEREIN)? IF NOT, HAS THE THEORY OR DEBATE BEEN ACCEPTED OR REJECTED? DOES IT NEED TO BE REHERESSED HERE?

No

IS THE FOCUS-THEORY WIDELY DEBATED? IF YES, WHERE DOES THE TEXT STAND? DOES IT DECLARE THIS STANCE?

It does not seem to be reflecting a current debate but is challenging assumptions embedded in certain practices (esp regarding amateur involvement). It does not declare a stance but makes its views, regarding need for discipline and for professional historians, and regarding reasons for being cautious about using the resource quite clear.

DOES THE TEXT HAVE ANY DECLARED OR UNDECLARED PHILOSOPHICAL STANCES OR FUNDAMENTAL ASSUMPTIONS?

It assumes that history of non-mainstream social actors is important. It also assumes that professional (academically trained) historians are required. The oral history project should not be seen as an opportunity for an individual to reminisce about themselves but as an opportunity to acquire an historical resource.

It also recognizes the role of the interviewer in “creating” the resulting interview, because of

the interviewers own knowledge or lack thereof, the effect their gender has, and other factors that make the interviewer “become part of the historical process.”

WHAT ARE THE KEY POINTS/QUESTIONS/THEMES OF THE ARTICLE?

Why few texts were written and few centrally saved. Benefit to later researchers of governments seizing records as evidence against left-wing activist. Details some specific instances where left-wing activists/union members destroyed their own records. Describes his own search for records while he was studying labour history. Summarizes characteristics of the historians practicing oral history, the advantages of making up for lost time, the disadvantageousness of it becoming an industry no one is prepared for, and in which there is little discipline.

Describes errors made in interviewing techniques, and discusses the importance of treating oral history as a source not as “the last word” which is particularly dangerous in the “politically-charged” area of labour history. This is because the writing of history of left-wing activism can itself become the way of continuing hostilities, because the conflicts are not resolved. Mentions some of the specific points on which researchers using oral history should be cautious. Emphasizes the importance of having oral history projects carried out by professional historians and not by amateurs.

The main theme is the importance of collecting the oral history in a disciplined manner, by well-informed people who can keep their opinions to themselves. It reads as a sort of word of caution about over-enthusiastic amateurs, while not wanting to be discouraging. It also focusses on the importance of understanding the weakness as well as the value of oral history as a resource – it should be treated “critically and knowledgeably.

WHAT ARE THE KEY RHETORICAL/PHILOSOPHICAL/EVIDENCE BASED ETC ARGUMENTS (THE LOAD-BEARING IDEAS) UPON WHICH THE TEXT DEPENDS TO BE CONVINCING?

Author is a professional historian and very familiar with the importance of, and use of, this kind of material.

It is an informed personal view (and does not hesitate occasionally to give personal opinion, e.g., on the quality of the person hired to write a history of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees and General Workers).

HOW IS THE ARGUMENT/POINT PRESENTED – RHETORICAL, LITERATURE/RESEARCH-BASED, PRACTICE/CASE STUDY-BASED?

Most of the evidence is based on the author's experience of looking for, using and later curating these kinds of records.

He presents the great value of oral history, before warning of some of the weaknesses, so overall is in favour but seems to think that there is inappropriate use.

Some small ethnographic feel to it in places, when he describes his first attempt to find the records with the help of a 'bemused security guard' at a storage facility in Ottawa.

IS THIS TEXT COMMENTED UPON/RESPONDED TO IN ANY OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW/DATA TEXT?

No

WHAT QUESTIONS DID THE TEXT LEAVE UNANSWERED?

None

WHAT QUESTIONS DID IT INSPIRE?

None other than those implied by the passage of time – how much of this is still valid? What difference has technology made? Are “amateurs” more informed about what used to be more specialist academic disciplines? What about post-custodial oral history?

CONTAINS ANY ISSUES TO BEAR IN MIND/COUNTER-ARGUMENTS?

[This question was inspired by a point made in Clarke's *History, Theory, Text*, that when reading a debate, the reader should note those things that they were mentally labelling as “issues to be borne in mind,” and “possible counter-arguments”, which mean that the reader has chosen what they think of as “our” and are planning to engage with the “other” only insofar as making sure it does not undermine “our” existence.]

WHAT IMPLICATIONS OR ISSUES DID IT LEAVE UNRESOLVED?

None

IS THERE ANY FUNDAMENTAL WEAKNESS IN/OBJECTION TO TEXT?

None.

[This question was added to prompt reflection when analysing a text where there might be a conflict between the assumptions of the writer (e.g., about the responsibilities of an archivist) and those of the researcher, where the writing style

was difficult or alienating (e.g., repeated use of “we” is distracting), or where the text was not from an academic source.]

DETERIORATION IN RELEVANCE?

No

[This referred usually to the age of the documents but sometimes to its role in a debate (e.g., over whether or not archival practice required theory) that had been resolved, or at least abandoned in the journals]

FIELD OF PRODUCTION?

[A shorthand to note the other authors quoted by the author of the text being analysed; indicating their reliability, whether they are dealing with areas with which the researcher is unfamiliar, and if there is a specific underlying philosophy or ideology (e.g., rejection of postmodernist philosophies, espousal of Freudian analysis etc)

Source for form: based on the Document Analysis Worksheet devised by the Education Staff at the National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. 20408. Downloaded in October 2012.